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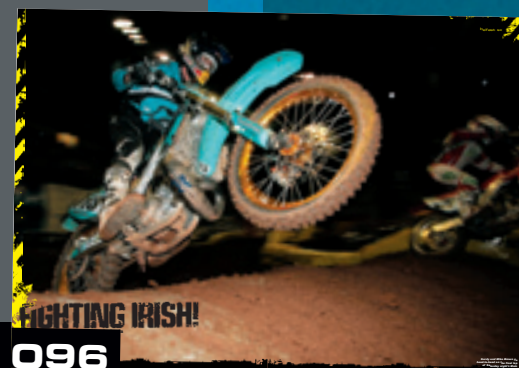
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January

2007

DIRTBIKE
RIDER



COMMENT

SO, WHO'S up for the 2007 British GP? I am and I'm sure you am(!) as well but do our opinions really matter? I heard a whisper this week that British fans may not get their annual fix of world championship racing in '07 which if true is – in a word – gutting!

So why is it that we struggle to put on a GP that ticks all the right boxes – ie that it runs smoothly on a good track with great infrastructure and the promoters get enough (paying) spectators to make it financially successful. At the back end of the '90s Foxhill was consistently the best GP of the year and the valley always seemed to be rammed with fans so what are we doing wrong now?

Maybe it's a sign of the times that we have to be so professional these days. How many of you had to be towed out of the car park at Foxhill by the farmer at a tenner a pop? But that's how motocross had always been so we kind of just accepted it. Nowadays facilities have to be so much better for GPs and, to be honest, if motocross is ever going to appeal to a more mainstream audience then our biggest events have to cater for, er, a more mainstream audience.

Which makes another whisper I've heard this week all the more interesting (note the use of the word whisper here – in other words it's not necessarily a carved-in-stone fact!) The whisperer in question reckons that Youthstream have been looking into the possibilities of a GP motocross track at a major, major road race venue in the UK.

I bet quite a few of you who remember being towed out of Foxhill also remember the short-lived Shell Advance series that featured a round at Donington Park. The track was built inside the circuit and was, to be fair, pretty crappy with a pebbly surface that wouldn't have looked out of place with the sea lapping up to it.

I'm not 100 per cent sure of all the ins and outs – I seem to recall that the Donington owners wanted a temporary track that could be 'disappeared' as soon as the event was over – but to my mind MX circuits at road racing venues is the way we need to go for world championship events. The infrastructure's there, they're used to catering for large numbers of spectators and dirt can easily be brought in to build an arse-kicking track. And somewhere like Donington – where the road network's up to the job and local residents are used to large numbers of fans spilling in and out – has to be ideal.

It doesn't matter how Herculean the efforts of the Steve Dixons, Mark Chamberlains and Rob Bradleys of this world are, the days of staging British GPs in the rolling English countryside are numbered and that number may be up already.

Okay, my will to live has already been stretched to breaking point this month so just time to say well done to David Knight and Wayne Braybrook for slipping the Yanks some prime British beef at The Last Man Standing extreme enduro in Texas – good work you pair of strapping fellows – and to say a big thanks to monstero.com for the loan of a minibike to DBR's Deputy Dawg for the Belfast International Supercross. Okay, so Sutt's evil plans to take down Dobber, El Perretto and the tattooed one outta Boyzone in the first turn didn't quite come off but at least he tried!

Have a great Christmas and New Year – Sutt's going to Prague, Swordy's going training, Gordy's probably going trials riding and Billy Mac's apparently going skiing but I'll be keeping it real and going down the pub...

Sean

Can Dougie get back on top at Sheffield?

© Sutt

SHEFF'S SPECIAL!

Avondale serve up indoor feast

BREAKING FREE from the restraints of the FIM Indoor World Trials Championship's rules and regulations appears to have done the promoters of the annual Sheffield Indoor Trial the world of good as their second event of 2006 promises to be the best ever!

By being able to pick the riders they want to attend and also by moving to a pre-New Year date, Martin Lampkin and Neil Crosswaite of Avondale Management promise the 2006 trials season will end with a bang in Sheffield's Hallam FM Arena.

The six stars Avondale have carefully chosen are led by Gas Gas' current indoor and outdoor world champ Adam Raga. The cocky Catalan will be looking for revenge in Sheffield after being knocked off the top podium spot earlier in the year – and in the very last section – by Beta's wildcard Antonio Bou.

And Bou's back to defend his Sheffield crown but it's the last time we'll see the 20-year-old Spaniard on a Beta as Toni jumps ship to the Montesa team, joining Dougie Lampkin and Takahisa Fujinami for '07.

The four-stroke powered Monts have struggled a little indoors since they made their international debut in Sheffield during 2005's epic but both Lampkin and Fujigas will be back to try and put that right. Lampkin's already an eight-time winner of the event and with the backing of what will most likely be a sell-out crowd could well make it nine come December 29.

Another Brit looking for glory on home ground is former Junior world champion James Dabill. Dabill,

like Bou, is Beta-mounted for the final time in Sheffield as he too makes the move to four-stroke Honda power in '07 with the Italian-based TRW Trial Racing team. With that in mind it's unlikely James will be running as spectacular a haircut as he rocked in last January's edition of the trial.

The final rider of the spantacular six is Sherco's Spanish sensation Albert Cabestany. Prince Albert's an ex-indoor world champ so must also be a serious threat to take the win.

And if you're as anxious as we are to know who the winner will be you need to be a part of the Sheffield event by buying a ticket before they're all gone! Tickets are priced at £27.50 for adults and £18.50 for under 14s and are available in advance by ringing the Hallam FM Arena box office on **0114 256 5656**. Over half the available tickets have already been snapped up so call now to ensure you get a section-side seat for this annually awesome event.

For more information on Yaarkshire's and the world's #1 indoor trial check out the official website at www.indoortrials.com – we'll see you there at 7pm on Friday December 29.

Something special... Dougie Lampkin VIP packages also available

*If you fancy entering via a VIP entrance before watching the trial while mingling with stars, enjoying complimentary food and drinks and wearing a limited edition Dougie Lampkin cap – and then meeting the man himself – you can! Priced at £99.95 per person, there are only a limited number of Dougie Lampkin VIP packages left so act now to secure yours by phone on **0161 763 6660** or email at info@g2f.co.uk.*

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BLAME CANADA!

There's plenty of controversy north of the border at round one of the Amp'd Mobile World Supercross GP series held in Toronto

THERE WAS a time when the Canadian SXGP rounds were considered mere warm up races for the infinitely more important AMA points chase. But now, with supercross growing into a multi-million dollar global giant, the Canadian races are considered to be the real start of the supercross season.

With AMA champ Ricky Carmichael retiring from full-time racing it's the reigning SXGP champion James Stewart who's considered favourite to win in Toronto. But Bubba's suffering some sort of brain fade and the Kawasaki star is riding wilder than ever which has terrible consequences for fellow competitors Ivan Tedesco and Travis Preston. After tangling with Bubba in practice Tedesco's taken to ER with a broken hand while Preston...well, more about that later.

As the gate drops for the Supercross class Main it's Nick Wey who grabs the holeshot followed by Reed who quickly moves into the lead. Stewart has to come from a little further back but is able to take advantage of a Carmichael crash as he moves through the pack.

At the midway point of the race Stewart finally catches Reed and makes an aggressive move on the L+M Yamaha star in a 180 degree left-hander. The Aussie fights right back just a few turns later but Bubba makes a carbon copy of his original pass to get back in front. From there things get crazy.

Stewart and Chad make contact which sends Bubba and his bike off the track. As Chad takes over the lead Bubba rides straight back onto the track without checking for traffic into the path of Preston who's mid-flight. As Preston lands he has nowhere to go and hits Bubba on his right ankle causing both riders to go down. Stewart remounts to finish third behind winner Reed and Carmichael but as he finishes the race he collapses in pain.

Preston's none too impressed and shares his thoughts with Bubba before being pulled away by race officials. As DBR goes to press no one's sure about the extent of Bubba's injuries or the outcome of the protests both Preston and Tedesco have filed against the Kawasaki rider over his alleged dangerous riding.



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**Cover: Chad Reed
surprised everyone
with victory at the
opening SXGP race of
the series in Toronto
(hoppeworld.com)
Contents main image:
The sun's setting – just
time for one last shot...
(Sutty)**



WIN! WIN! WIN!

Nitro Circus Crew sway up for grabs

THANKS IN part to Geoff Walker's shameless schmoozing of Streetbike Tommy during last summer's Red Bull Romaniacs, we're reet well in with t'Nitro Circus Crew. And to mark the launch of Lock 'n Load they've given us a bunch of top swag to pass on to you lot!

All-in-all we've got five fan-frikkin'-tastic Nitro Circus Crew packs up for grabs made up of a Travis Pastrana signed poster, Nitro Circus Crew hoody and a t-shirt (all size XL), Nitro Circus collector's edition box set of the first three flicks plus a bonus DVD, Nitro Circus Crew hat and a copy of Lock 'n Load!

To be in with a chance of winning just tell us the name of DBR's technical eejit who makes a brief guest appearance in Lock 'n Load.

- Is it: A) Geoff Walker
B) Murray Walker
C) Chris Walker
D) Geoff Geoffofferson

Think you know the answer? Then go to www.dirtbikerider.com and follow the link to the Nitro Circus competition or write the answer – along with your name, address and a daytime telephone number – on the back of a postcard or sealed down envelope and send it to us at this here address:

Nitro Circus Comp, DBR, 12 Victoria Street, Morecambe, Lancs, LA4 4AG.

The first five correct answers drawn by DBR's resident competition drawer Randy Random after the closing date of January 18 get the goodies. Goody!



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BUY N' FLY!

IF YOU'VE ever fancied getting your hands on a full GP-spec Molson Kawasaki race bike then now is the time to put your hand in your pocket and pull out the spondoolies because three of the fully-prepped works weapons are up for sale!

That's right, the race-ready Kawasaki machines of Molson teamsters Tommy Searle, Tom Church and Gareth Swanepoel – which were featured in our December issue – are now up for grabs and it's our very own tip-top tech Geoff Walker who's doing the selling. So if you fancy racing an awesome bike in '07 drop Geoff an email at geoffwalkerdb@gmail.com.



DVD DELIGHT!

MXGP LEGEND Stefan Everts has produced and released a cracking two-disc DVD named *Stairway to Glory* that celebrates Stefan's lengthy and very successful racing career from fresh beginnings to the very end.

The first DVD features 90 minute's worth of racing footage, right from Stefan's first world championship win with Suzuki in 1991 to his record-setting, legendary 10th title last year. As well as all the awesome action, insightful and in-depth interviews punctuate the point that Stefan's one hell of a successful athlete.

The second disc is mostly unseen footage featuring freeride action, a behind-the-scenes look of the '06 Namur and Ernee GPs and an exclusive clip of Stefan's very first tentative laps on a motocross bike. We're promised it's a very well produced and entertaining DVD that's an absolutely essential purchase for any fans of this amazing champion. The DVD is available to buy online at www.stairwaytoglory.com for 45 Euros.

GORDON CROCKARD

SX SHOWDOWN!

GORDY SIGNS OFF THE SEASON IN STYLE AT THE BELFAST INTERNATIONAL SUPERCROSS.

WORDS BY GORDON CROCKARD PHOTO BY SUTTY

MERRY CHRISTMAS! Happy off-season!

Season's greetings! Okay, that's the small talk out of the way but I do mean it. This time of year is a tough one for magazine column content and I often wonder to myself who actually reads my stuff anyway? Is it kids, teenagers, young adults, dads, rivals, sponsors, mates, mums, girls, DBR staff, myself? Really, I'm never to know so it's hard to know exactly what audience I have (if any) and how to make it good reading and fun.

DBR never seem to complain too much so I must be doing something right but on that note I don't think I'm ever going to be a contender for employee of the month as I'm normally lastminute.com with getting it over to the office before it goes to print. Perhaps that's why I haven't received my invite to the DBR Christmas party? Good job too as my stockpile of dance moves would make for some great photos...NOT (that's a Borat joke)!

Swiftly moving on from that controversially unprofessional word 'party', I can report on some cool points that have been happening. Matt Bates held a snazzy press launch to promote the Belfast Supercross and successfully acquired Shane Lynch from Boyzone to compete in the minibike race. Apparently – and not from my own assessment – he's pretty charming to the ladies' eyes. So for the first time ever there were more women at the press conference than men. They love him! It's sickening! But fair play to the guy, he's really dead-on and at the end of the day...the hungry must be fed!

For the supercross I had to do the same Cool FM radio stuff which is always good fun as the temptation to say whatever you like or, for others, whatever they wouldn't like is always hard to resist! I've managed to never swear on live TV or radio but it so easily could happen. Let's hope it never does!

Around the same time the Bercy SX was shown on Eurosport and watching it I found myself realising that I was sat on the sofa while Mike Brown and Others were getting excellent handlebar time in. I was racing against them in a week or so and felt some practice was needed. After a few calls I got organised to go to an indoor practice track in Ballyclare near Belfast and I'm so glad I did. It's called Dirtworks and was just what I was looking for. I went a couple of times and enjoyed it a lot. Dry, clean and warm are all good by me at this time of year!

That motto rolls over into other aspects too as now at home we've had an outbuilding converted into a gym. I can do all my training at home now, something I've wanted to do for a long time. Running the legs off yourself in the harsh Irish winter can sometimes be a bit too unpleasant but hopefully those dark, wet, cold training sessions won't be so common now that I've all the facilities indoors at home.

Myself and a large group of friends had a night out at the Odyssey in Belfast watching the Pink concert. She's a fantastic performer and puts on a mighty show. Carey Hart, the freestyle legend from the X-Games, sure has himself a fine wife in Mrs Pink. I don't know her real name and even if I did I

wouldn't let on as you'd think I was an obsessed fan. I'm more of a Shayne Lynch or Boyzone fan...NOT (that's another Borat joke)!

A few days later I was at the Odyssey again, this time for the Events 22 SX. The rider line-up was impressive and it's still surreal to me to be racing such competition, in a supercross, in an arena, in my home town. Ten years ago I'd have told you you were mad if you'd predicted that ever happening. Every year I hope for it to be a success as it has a massive positive effect on motocross in Ireland. It brings the sport to the people instead of the usual battle of trying to bring the people to the sport.

On Friday I won my three Supercross MX1 class heats and then qualified through to the Main Event which I led right up until the two-lap board. Erik Vallejo had crashed on the finishline double and the yellow flag went out – but the two-lap board was in front and bigger so I didn't see the yellow flag. At the last moment I saw Vallejo, thought I was going to land on him, backed off and crashed into the face of the second jump. So I lost the race. Bummer!

Thank goodness there was another night! Again I won my three heats and was set for a good final. Mike Brown and I had the closest race I've ever been in. He beat me to the flag by 0.8 of a second but I enjoyed the battle enough to be content with second. As much as I tried I just couldn't find a way past.

I borrowed my mate Graham Jellie's CR250 two-stroke for the race and Steve Clitheroe tuned the engine perfectly. Craig gave me a DEP pipe system, Peter supplied the Bridgestone tyres, Bagnalls printed my shirts and Rick and Rolly at Bodytech supplied the plastics for the bike. Andy at Alpinestars made my graphics and, of course, Michael Gibson from Russell's Motorcycles prepped and mechanised the machine. So thank you all very much – it was a great help and a great success!

As this is my last column for '06 I want to thank all of the Team Wulfsport Honda team members and sponsors. I'm very grateful for the support and opportunities that were given to me and I appreciate you showing belief in my ability to race to the standard required.

Finally, my mate Rolly Sutor is recovering from major surgery and on behalf of myself and all his friends I'd like to wish him all the best for the future and may he have a rapid return to his remarkable self! Get well soon BIG MAN!



BRITISH BEEF!

UK aces David Knight and Wayne Braybrook give the Yanks something to chew on in Texas!

BRITISH BATTLERS David Knight and Wayne Braybrook prove once again that British beef is best – when it comes to XXX enduros at least – by dominating both parts of the Red Bull Last Man Standing event in the Lone Star state of Texas.

Stage one's intended to whittle down the number of riders as only those who finish within an hour of the winner transfer to the night stage of the race. But not even the event organisers could anticipate that Knighter would set such a fast pace

that only 11 of the original 128 starters make it through to part two.

And as the 11 finalists start it's Knighter who grabs the lead and pulls a gap on the small field before having to stop midway through the 40-mile loop to fix what he thinks is a broken headlight. After finding the on-switch in the off position, Knighter flicks it over and blazes to the finish, winning by a large margin.

Meanwhile, Braybrook's working his way to the

end too and as the cut-off time for official finishers is reached finds himself along with Knight as the only two men to make it to the chequered flag.

"That's the hardest thing I've ever done on a motorcycle," reckons Braybrook. "It makes Hells Gate look like a walk in the park." And even Knighter agrees. "Last Man Standing is the toughest event of the year," claims the Manxman. "You know you've just got to keep trying and trying and for me that's what makes it brilliant!"





HALF-CENTURY!

Sandiford's hit 50

Over 200 guests attended a special dinner at the start of December to mark the golden jubilee of James Sandiford Motorcycles. Celebrities spanning all five decades enjoyed an evening of unique entertainment – including a special address by Martin and Dougie Lampkin.

The Lancashire-based company, now run by Caroline and Martin Sandiford with the support of their mother Alwyn, continues to achieve great success since the sad loss of founder Jim to cancer 13 years ago.

On top of their role as official UK dealer for Montesa trials bikes, Sandiford's are also a major Honda off-road dealer and this fact was recognised by Honda UK's Kevin Williams who presented the family with a special golden disc to mark their 50 years in business.

The evening followed on from the official UK launch of the 2007 Montesa Cota 4RT that attracted almost 100 riders who braved fierce weather conditions to test the new four-stroke.

So a great day for the Sandiford clan who would like to pass on their thanks to everyone who has helped and supported them over the past half-century and who attended the celebrations.

DABILL DEPARTS

Euro champ goes four-stroke

IT'S ALL change for reigning European and '05 world junior trials champ James Dabill who's left one Italian trials team for another!

The Leeds star – ranked ninth in the world after his first full season at the highest level – has quit TTT Beta in favour of a Montesa 4RT ride with the Future TRW team. For 2007 he'll concentrate on the world and Italian championships with a few James Sandiford-supported rides in the UK when his schedule allows.

"This is a massive opportunity for me," says James. "The Future TRW Montesa team has all the resources available to help take me to the next level. Their commitment is second to none so I really want to repay the faith they have shown in me by giving them the results I know we can achieve together."

"From what I have seen to date, their 2007 spec bike is an awesome bit of kit and has plenty of power for world championship type sections. I know it is going to take time to adjust to the four-stroke but I am really excited."

James would like to publicly thank the Top Trial Team, Beta and UK importer John Lampkin for their support. James' last appearance on a Beta will be at Sheffield Arena on **December 29**.

RHAYADER DATES

ALL GOOD boy scouts know about the importance of being prepared and it looks like the Rhayader club are in with a fighting chance of their 'releasing next year's dates very early' badge.

For 2007 the club's hugely successful three-round series of Wednesday evening meetings – sponsored by PAR Homes and Bache's Bargains – will be held on May 30, June 13 and July 4. All events will run at the steep, slick and challenging Cwmythig Hill circuit near Rhayader. Classes will cater for Experts, Seniors, Juniors, Novices and Beginners.

The 2006 series attracted well over 14,000 spectators as well as some top national riders including overall winner Mark Jones and the likes of Brad Anderson, Gordon Crockard, Mark Hucklebridge, Tom Church and Lewis Gregory.



MENTAL FORTITUDE!

WHAT DOESN'T BREAK YOU MAKES YOU STRONGER AND ALTHOUGH SWORDY'S GOT A LONG WAY TO GO PHYSICALLY, MENTALLY HE'S FIGHTING FIT...

WORDS BY STEPHEN SWORD PHOTO BY SUTTY

JUST AFTER I wrote last month's column I headed up to my homeland in Scotland. It was my first time up there since my crash and I was long overdue a nice bit of haggis! Now I know haggis isn't everyone's cup of tea but being from Scotland I was brought up on it from an early age. I like it for breakfast grilled on toast or in a sandwich with a little tomato ketchup. Sounds disgusting but don't knock it until you've tried it!

So I enjoyed a few days up there just chilling out with my brother and visiting a few people. When I had my accident back in May and was in hospital my gramma passed away which meant I was unable to go to the funeral so Jodie and I took some flowers up there one afternoon.

The injury is progressing and I'm continuing with training to build my leg back to full strength. As I said in last month's column I had the pin and plates removed so had to rest it for a few weeks but now I'm walking slowly and I'm able to go out mountainbiking which helps a lot with the healing.

It's going to be January when I get back on a bike. I'm mentally ready for that but need to get my leg really strong and get my fitness at a good level. I think it is very important for anyone coming back from a big injury not to come back too early – and when you do come back make sure you're stronger and fitter. I'm a firm believer in that a strong body makes a stronger mind and what doesn't break you makes you stronger. You have to feed off the negatives and turn them into positives. I've had to do this a lot over the last seven months and as a result I feel a lot stronger in my mind than I was before I had my accident.

I say this in my column every month and I'm going to say it again. I'm so looking forward to throwing my leg over the bike again. I haven't even sat on one or started one up since the beginning of May. My whole career I have never gone that long without riding a motorcycle – it's quite a shock

to the system I can tell you. But this is a good thing as it will make it that much sweeter when I do ride again!

My plan for this winter is to do a lot of training with Dave Thorpe. I've known Dave for many years and have a good relationship with him. He's taught me a lot about training and about how to prepare myself mentally at a high level. Dave has been in similar situations to me throughout his career and knows how to bounce back from injuries. But one of the best things about Dave is that he is always willing to listen and if you give him 100 per cent he will give 110 per cent back.

After training in the mornings I've been getting out to play some golf. My old mate from Wootton-Under-Edge Brian 'Spud' Wheeler was down my way so we met up for a round. Of course, the usual rules applied – the loser pays for the food and drinks after. And I'm pleased to say I came out on top and rubbed salt well into Spud's wounds afterwards! I also went to the cinema with a few mates to watch the new Bond film Casino Royale. I loved it and thought the new guy playing Bond was excellent. I could easily sit down and watch all the Bond films one after another.

Last weekend the Poole and Parkstone club kindly asked me to do the prizegiving at their presentation evening which was being held at a country park just outside Ringwood. Jodie and I were both made very welcome and we really enjoyed the evening and caught up with some old faces I haven't seen for a while.

I know it's a bit early but Jodie has got the Christmas tree and all the decorations down ready to start decorating. Looks like it's going to be a busy day for me putting up fairy lights...

Well, that wraps up another month from me so I'd like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very merry Christmas. Have a good one!





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Bumped!

DK lucks out in Vegas as Dowd wins big

Words and photos by Jonty Edmunds

David Knight's hopes of defending his AMA Endurocross title effectively end in turn one of the final at the Las Vegas event when the Enduro 3 world champ gets hit from behind and caught up in the ensuing chaos.

"I got hit by someone on a Kawasaki in turn one," recalls Knight. "I thought I had the start, I was right next to Dowd coming into the first turn. Then I was caught up in a pile of bikes and riders and Dowd was already miles ahead."

Despite quickly working his way back up to third Knight is powerless to catch eventual winner Dowd. Trying everything he knows to close the gap on the former AMA motocross and supercross star, Knight realises that his efforts aren't getting him anywhere so decides to ease his pace and accept third.

"Dowd was riding well with a clear track ahead of him and I could see I wasn't catching him. There wasn't really anywhere to make up time so I settled for third."

With DK accepting the third-place spot the battle for the lead sees Suzuki-mounted Dowd hold off Kawasaki's Nathan Woods as the pair go bar-to-bar during the closing laps.

"I knew he was there - we bumped a bunch of times - but I knew I could hold him off," comments Dowd. "Getting the start sure helped me, I had a clear track ahead of me which made a big difference. I'm made up to have won."

Claiming second despite his best efforts to find a way around Dowd, Woods tries a last lap move that sees him come close to landing on Dowd. Ending up on the stadium floor, the West Coast racer still manages to claim the runner-up spot.

"I had to try something a little crazy because there was no other way to get past," admits Woods. "I'd like to have won but, hey, there's always next year."

Results

AMA Endurocross

- 1 John Dowd (Suzuki)
- 2 Nathan Woods (Kawasaki)
- 3 David Knight (KTM)
- 4 Eric Rhoten (Honda)
- 5 Matt Karlson (Kawasaki)
- 6 Homero Diaz (Yamaha)
- 7 Geoff Aaron (KTM)
- 8 Ryan Dudek (Kawasaki)
- 9 Nick Mantzoros (Sherco)
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BLARNEY

WORDS BY STEVIE MILLS PHOTO BY SUTTY

HO HO HO!

TIS THE SEASON TO BE JOLLY – APART FROM AT THE END OF THIS MONTH'S BLARNEY WHEN STEVIE GETS ALL DEEP AND MEANINGFUL!

YES, IT'S that time of year again when turkeys get scared, fat men in red suits are popular, credit card limits become credit card targets and the local motocross dealers make bucketloads of money!

And then it's out with the old and in with the new and 2007 will bring with it fresh hopes and fears that may well change fortunes for the better over the coming months. One such change will be the well-documented move by Gordon Crockard from Wulfsport to PAR Honda. While it may have come as a bit of a surprise to some, take a moment and reflect on the season just past. Both Wulfsport and GC gave and received equal value in 2006.

Roger Magee's team have earned their place in the GP paddocks of the world circus largely through the efforts and return to form of the Crock Star. Equally, Wulfsport created an opportunity from which for GC to rebuild his career which he seems to have done.

As GC told DBR readers in his column last month, he needs to earn money to pay the mortgage and at the same time is under no illusion that time is not on his side if he is to complete the journey that he started out on a long time ago.

For my money PAR Honda have come a long way in a relatively short period of time – investing in Crockard shows that they are ready for the move to full-time GPs and trust in his experience to prepare them for the long haul. The owner of the PAR race team – Paul Rowlands – is himself a fighter, a true motocross enthusiast, competitor and successful businessman. Paul has his sights on the bigger picture.

The Events 22 show at the Odyssey Arena was a resounding success and the crowd were rewarded with an on-form display from GC throughout the weekend – I have not seen GC ride like that for years and it did my heart and lungs good!

Robert Hamilton will work on a 'big job' next year – the move from GOMX to the highly esteemed Pioneer Yamaha squad will give Robert the best opportunity possible to raise his game. It will be a tough job but Mike Foster will get 100 per cent respect and effort from his new signing.

Martin Barr will embrace the New Year. After resigning a MX2 deal with Steve Dixon's outfit, '07 should see Martin return to the form that brought him the much-coveted Irish Racer Motorcyclist of the Year award in 2006. Speaking of which, the Irish Racer/Dirtmx awards 'Night at the Oscars' will take place at the Ramada Hotel on January 19 – have you reserved your tickets yet?

So who is in the running for the top awards, more specifically Motorcyclist of the Year and Motocrosser of the Year? To be honest, I cannot see anyone in Irish motorcycling outshining Mr PR himself Jonny Rea. This young man claimed two seconds and a third at British

Superbike level but following three wins at the end-of-season Sunflower meeting after signing for the factory Honda team Jonny crashed the very next weekend and needed major surgery.

As for Motocross Rider of the Year? Well, GC's third in the British championship and two fourths in GPs must surely put Ireland's most popular and successful off-road rider in the running. I honestly can't think of anyone else who could overshadow the Perfect Season of Philip McCullough who won all four national championships in 2006. In fact, the one low point in Phil's season came in November when his farewell

ride at the Odyssey had to be abandoned when he injured himself during preparations for the Belfast SX.

The annual MRA AGM resulted in the main office positions being renewed and it also passed their race format for Ulster championship days – that's two motos per class. There will no doubt be a massive backlash from riders who feel that adding the cost of another two rounds to the series while giving less 'laps per pound' is unfair. However, all the

club delegates that attended the AGM will have voted in this democratic process – that's the thing about democracy, be careful what you vote for as you just might get it!

The main reason cited for cutting back to the two-race format was to allow for racing to finish earlier for the benefit of First Aid and track staff and I agree with that (these people like to have a Saturday night too)!

It's always going to be an impossible task to please everybody with so many classes, championships, competitors and personalities to accommodate on race day.

Let's take a moment and get things into perspective here. It's Christmas – a time for reflection, family, friends and hope for the future. We live in a throwaway society, one that demands instant gratification at any price – play today, pay tomorrow or the day after tomorrow will do. The majority of kids nowadays know the price of everything yet the value of nothing and I can't help thinking that somehow that's our fault.

Sometimes we all are guilty of losing sight of just what is important in life – we are indeed the lucky ones in this part of the world. If our problems are based around whether we race twice or three times a day or on which colour of motorcycle we ride, how far removed from reality must we be?

So on behalf of everyone at Dirt Bike Rider I'd like to wish you good thoughts and leave you with this – may your best days of 2006 be your worst days of 2007!

Stevie



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JONTY'S BOX

WORDS AND PHOTO BY JONTY EDMUNDS

HEAD-TO-HEAD!

ONCE IT STOOD HEAD AND SHOULDERS ABOVE ALL OTHER ENDUROS BUT NOW THE ISDE HAS SOME SERIOUS COMPETITION

ON NOVEMBER 18 the longest-standing event in the international enduro calendar clashed head-on with the newest. After 80 years the International Six Days Enduro finally had a little competition of its own.

Taking place thousands of miles away from New Zealand in an arena in Las Vegas, the third running of the Endurocross unfolded in front of a sell-out crowd. For most involved in the six days the running of any other event on the same date is of little significance. But when the defending overall ISDE winner chooses that event over the 'Olympics of Motorcycling' – an event perceived by many as being the single most important enduro competition in the world – it suddenly becomes an clash of significance. Real significance.

For the majority of the ridiculously high number of competitors in this year's ISDE – 635 starters to be exact – the fact that David Knight chose to race in 'another event' wasn't, I'm sure, too high on their list of things to worry about before, during or even after the six days. But step back from both events and take a long hard look at the situation for a moment or two. While Knight's no show at the six days is by no means the death of the event the fact that he chose not to compete is of real significance to the sport of enduro.

What does this tell us? Simple. That the International Six Days Enduro is a far less important event for a growing number of the world's best enduro riders than it once was. Sure, it still has mass appeal – let's face it the ISDE is rapidly becoming the world's biggest international trail ride – but how long will that last if there's a continued dilution of the Trophy and Junior Trophy team riders?

Where once finishing the ISDE was an achievement in itself even for Trophy team riders and a good result of equal significance to any achieved in the world or European championship, avoiding a spoiled result due to having got held up behind Japanese, Venezuelan or Greek competitors is now the biggest challenge for the world's best. Where once gold medal finishes were linked to bonuses worth having, riders rich in talent but from poor federations strive to cut corners in order to keep their spending to a minimum. Where once manufacturers used the event to prove their products were 'ISDE tough', they're now only really interested in selling bikes to competitors.

The problem as I see it is this. The ISDE is an event that hasn't

changed with the times, a hugely expensive event for all concerned and one that the FIM thinks is fine thank you very much, preferring a large number of competitors over a lower number of higher quality riders. By opting for quantity over quality the FIM cause no end of headaches each and every year at the six days – normally when the weather turns bad. Let's face it, if it rains keeping control of an event that has over 600 competitors is hard enough when using only Tarmac and gravel roads. When talking about challenging off-road terrain and a large number of amateur riders it spells disaster.

In order to accommodate the large number of riders six day events have to become easier, courses bigger, the number of special tests ridden fewer. Even then when the weather turns bad things are still too difficult for a large percentage of the entry, causing time checks, special tests and even complete days to be scrapped. Meanwhile, at the sharp end of the event, the six days becomes a damn sight easier than it used to be in the good old days.

As a result of FIM-sanctioned larger entries the ISDE has become easier. This in turn reduces the challenges for the world's best riders, the very same riders that for decades the event was designed to cater for.

In order for the ISDE to continue to attract both top-level riders and enthusiastic amateurs for another 81 years and – more importantly – to re-establish itself as an event of real importance, the FIM need to act now. They have two options available to them, depending on how serious they are on re-establishing the six days as the great event it once was. If they simply want to see record numbers of competitors starting each year they have to do nothing. Absolutely nothing.

But if they want to ensure that the world's best compete, that the event becomes once again the single most important event in the international enduro calendar, then they need to reduce the number of entrants. By limiting the number of competitors to a Trophy, Junior Trophy and a maximum of four club teams per country the ISDE can become a tougher, multi-lap event with more special tests and a quality entry. Yes, the ISDE would be difficult to fund with reduced entries but it would also become a much better event.

Then again, to make things simpler for all the event could be replaced with the Enduro des Nations – one event, two days, four classes...



THE ISDE HAS BECOME ALMOST TOO EASY FOR RIDERS OF THE CALIBRE OF SIMONE ALBERGONI



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Write to Rant, get your letter published and you'll win a one-litre trigger bottle of marvellous bike cleaning fluid Muc-Off. And if we rate your letter highly enough you'll also receive our monthly star prize – which for this month is a closely guarded secret...



TRACK BUILDER

I'm 15 years old and I've been trying my best to save money so I can buy myself a 125cc bike so I can go riding with my friends but there always seems to be something to ruin my plan, like having to fork out for stupid birthdays and stuff!

One of my friends has a YZ125 which is scary fast on open fields! We've recently built a track on his farm which is awesome. It took about five weekends of digging with a spade, then wheel-barrowing the mud from one place to another to form whoops, ramps and bowl turns – although it's no championship-standard motocross track it's good fun to ride.

I've recently been fixing his Honda XL125 that we use for banging about the farm. Every copy of your magazine reminds me of how much joy I have when I sit on a MX bike.

Rhys, Wales

Building a track with a shovel and wheelbarrow is pretty hardcore – you must have forearm muscles like Popeye. At least when you finally get yourself a bike you'll probably never get arm pump!

DIRTBIKE DELIGHT!

I'm just writing in to comment on how much of a delight it was to be working at the Dirt Bike Show. Everyone was so lovely and really nice (which helped with the hangovers). Overall it was a great success and I can't wait until next year! I'm so excited! Loves you all! Mwah!

SXE7, via email

Right...

WHERE'S PONDO?

I really enjoyed reading the Weston Beach Race feature in last month's DBR as it was a very different look at the event and a very entertaining read. At the end of the piece there's a mention of a blog by the article's author called Pondo's Pitbox on the www.dirtbikerider.com website. Either I'm blind, some sort of fool or there is no Pondo's Pitbox on the website as after hours spent looking I cannot find it. What's going on?

Dave, Scotland

Dave, there's no other way of putting it – you're either blind or a fool. Pondo's Pitbox is right there on the DBR website. Type www.dirtbikerider.com into your web browser then when it uploads click on 'news', then 'Blogs – Pondo's Pitbox' and you'll find what you're looking for as well as a bunch of other kick-ass online features. Go get 'em cowboy!

COMP WINNERS!

I would just like to thank all at DBR and Alison Turner for a great weekend. The boys and I met Mike Alessi and then hung out with him for a while in the lounge which was cool. Mike was really good with the kids and gave them a signed race shirt and goggles which was more than we ever expected and are very grateful for.

The racing was great and the only mix up was that they thought I had come to interview David Vuillemin which I can do next time for you for a small fee. Thanks again DBR, Alison and you Mike if you're reading.

Andy, Josh and Isaac, Yorkshire

We're glad you had a great time. We thought the Sheffield race was pretty good so we'll hopefully see you there again in '07.



STICKER SNIFFER!

Hiya guys, great mag by the way, I know everyone says that but ya know! I've just bought a KX125 and got a small part-time job and with the money I earn I'd like to bling my bike up a bit. I've been looking at graphics and that but I want something that really stands out and ain't just the same as everyone else's.

I'm mainly looking at looks and not performance as I need to get used to the power delivery at first. I'm only 14 and I haven't got masses of money but with Christmas coming that should help. Any information you can pass on will be very helpful.

Connor, Doncaster

If you're after something completely different for your KX how about splashing out on a set of cool custom graphics from either blinkmx.com, evoke-concepts.com or danger-uk.co.uk – and if none of these companies can hook you up with something sweet for your Kawasaki then you're just far, far too fussy!

FLY CATCHER!

I can't believe I didn't hear about Dirt Bike Rider magazine before now! The magazine is truly amazing and so well edited. I think motocross is one of the best sports you can do. I currently own a YZ125 and every weekend after a day's spin out on the bike I can count the flies in my teeth – I enjoy riding bikes that much! Can't wait to read next issue! Keep up the good work!

Gwion, Wales

We're always striving to get out the best magazine we can so it's good to know our work is appreciated. So you keep catching those flies and we'll keep on giving you something great to read.

FLESH FAUX PAS?

I'd just like to say how much I enjoyed the Dirt Bike Show this year as it seemed to have a good mix of new bikes and products and plenty of bargains out in the retail halls. However, I do have one moan to make – what happened to all the girls? I'm positively positive that there were way more lycra clad lovelies last year.

Roger, Staffordshire

Yeah, you might actually be right there Roger but surely it's not such a bad thing – I mean, you don't really want loads of fake-tanned, saggy-skin blocking out all that lovely off-road bling do you?

SHARKY SHIFTER?

I've been trying to get a hold of a Hammerhead shift lever for my CR250 two-stroke but I'm having difficulties locating one. I haven't got access to the internet and I can't find them advertised in any of the UK off-road publications. I remember there was one featured on one of your long-term test bikes – where the hell did you get it from?

Chris, Cambridgeshire

Good choice Chris – the Hammerhead is probably the last shift lever you'll ever buy as they're just so damn good. DSM Offroad used to import the lever and that's who supplied us with one to test but unfortunately they've dropped them from their range in '07.

However, Hammerhead parts are now being imported by a company called Powered Fun – www.poweredfun.com. Obviously, if you've not got the internet that link's not worth a bean to you so here's their telephone number instead – 01306 889911. Give 'em a bell and tell them the good old boys at DBR – that's Bo and Luke – sent you and they'll fix you up!



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DBR's MX Medic Alan Milway swears blind by heart rate monitors as he reckons they help you maximise the intensity of your training. The Polar F55 is a great HRM as it not only checks your BPMs but is also able to tell you how relaxed you are and give you basic guidelines for how hard and long you need to go to get the full benefit from your training time.

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Supplier: polarelectro.co.uk



SIXSIXONE

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There's even more hot new helmet designs from Sixsixone for 2007 as these orange and blue, ACU gold stamped beauties should be hitting a Sixsixone supplied store near you now!

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Supplier: dsmaffroad.com

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MAXIMA

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Maxima Oils are renowned in the US of A for being top notch lubricants that perform flawlessly in the toughest conditions imaginable. Maxima was founded by Cali-dude and all-round good guy Dick Lechien who also fathered '80s moto and supercross hero Ron – aka Dogger.

While Ron may have got a little sidetracked at times, Dick's other project – Maxima – has gone from strength to slippery strength. The full range of Maxima Racing Oils are now available in the UK so if you like Dick as much as we do you'll be sure to check out his oils at maximaracingoils.com.

Supplier: maximaracingoils.com

01694 781662



TWO BROTHERS RACING

M7 CRF150R

EXHAUST SYSTEMS

The Two Brothers M7 series of exhausts are now available for all bikes – including the all-new Honda CRF150R – as either slip-ons or complete systems. Two Brothers pipes are claimed to increase throttle response, broaden the powerband while saving weight and have a range of Power Tips available to tune the sound level of your bike to satisfy current noise regulations. You can choose between aluminium, titanium and carbon-fibre silencers and have a choice of stainless steel or titanium header pipes.

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Supplier: mbppowersports.com

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GP RACE KIT

Troy Lee Designs' GP racewear is considered to be the budget-priced line in the TLD range but still offer great looks and great fit at a great price!

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Pod MX

KNEE BRACE

PODMX is a new brand of knee brace specifically designed for motocross riders. The resultant brace is claimed to be streamlined and ergonomic so it doesn't compromise the rider's feel for the bike. POD also claim that hinging is the key to designing a superior knee brace as the knee is the most complex joint in your body. The PODMX brace uses a polymer hinge system which includes a thermo-plastic urethane tendon with a unique extension stop housing. This technology replicates the knees' natural range of motion and when used with the carbon composite frame and integrated patella guard offers maximum frontal, medial and lateral support.

Price: £499.95

Supplier: foxeurope.com

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MX TACTIC

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If you're a fan of biofoam under-jersey style chest protectors then you'll definitely wanna check out this awesome new Alpinestars one. It's available in two sizes – S/M and L/XL – and should take the sting out of roost and rocks while feeling much less constrictive than a plastic protector.

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KNIGHT'S RIDE!

His factory 525 KTM EXC has carried David Knight to a perfect WEC season – but what would happen when we let our technical eejit loose on it?

Words by Geoff Walker Photos by Suttly

*Pretty in pink!
GW puts DK's factory
525 through its paces*





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Easy does it! It may be like a 'stocker on steroids' but Knight's bike is super-nimble

FACTORY ENDURO TEAM

OUR SPORT is all about man and machine working together in perfect harmony but I need to know one thing. What do you do when the sports of enduro and extreme racing become all about a machine riding a machine?

My point is that Mr David Knight is a machine – an off-road riding robot with an incredible gift for being one of the fastest and happiest people in the world, especially when he is laying it down to his opposition week-in, week-out on his factory 525 KTM EXC special.

An opportunity doesn't come along very often to test a championship winning bike so when I was asked to head north to hook up with David's technician, Julian Stevens, I jumped at the chance. I really was excited about riding the bike exactly as it is ridden by the big man and having the opportunity to spend some time trying to figure out just what it is that makes that man that fast!

A place called Firbank was the location for the test and there had been a three-hour race

there a few weeks before. The place has bogs, rocks, streams, grass, hidden rocks, more rocks – you get the picture, the perfect place for a rip on this legend's bike.

First up was a chat with Julian about just how David likes his set-up. I wanted the bike exactly as he rides it. That meant high in the rear and soft in the front. The exact opposite to how I like my little Toomer. I was gonna learn something, that was for sure. So Julian set the levers, bars, heights and clickers to David's settings for the test area and off I went on my merry way.

This bike is all about motion. It really does not want to stop. The man must NEVER come to a halt! The power is smooth and linear as you would expect but there is more of it than stock. The stock 525's a real favourite straight from the crate. However, David's bike is like a stocker on steroids. It will not suffer fools and if you are planning a stop-start style of riding this is not the bike for any normal human.

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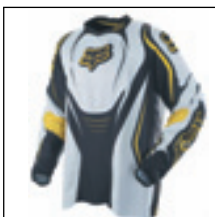
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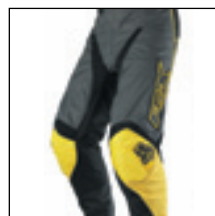
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The bike as a unit encourages the rider to stay in motion and I can see that with David's style of riding coupled with this machine the combination is a scary one for anyone hoping to beat him. I have never ridden an enduro bike which encourages this kind of behaviour. This thing takes any kind of gentlemanly behaviour and chucks it in the bin.

The controls are really positive with an amazing feel to the front brake which I personally don't think David uses at all. The Renthal Twinwall bars are set in the rear position in the clamps to help with turning. This really does work as I found on the flat grass turns of the test site. The turning aspect of the bike is very important as this is where David seems to have an advantage over every rider in enduros. The high rear end set-up and soft forks which I was concerned about worked well on the going and made turning on a sixpence a treat. This is a big bike and it turns better than my 250 EXCF. That is impressive.

The high rear end works great for turning and the handling is stable and positive on the going. The only negative on this set-up is when you get into a spot of bother and momentum ceases. I realise this doesn't happen with Mr

Knight at the WEC or BEC but it is a bit of a nightmare to find traction when you have come to a halt. Because the rear shock is set high and hard you need to be a heavyweight to load the back of the bike to get on the move again (I do have that covered – I'll get that in before you do Lawless). As far as this bike goes, that's the only negative and I think this is the reason that David never rides the 525 in extreme events. He would probably still breeze them but I personally wouldn't want to ride this weapon across the rock gardens of Erzberg...

One of the most fascinating things about this factory bike is that you, the customer, can actually go and buy most of the equipment to build this machine. This is one of the most positive aspects of KTM. They offer so many racing parts to the customer that you may have to remortgage your house to achieve your ultimate machine – but what a weapon it would be!

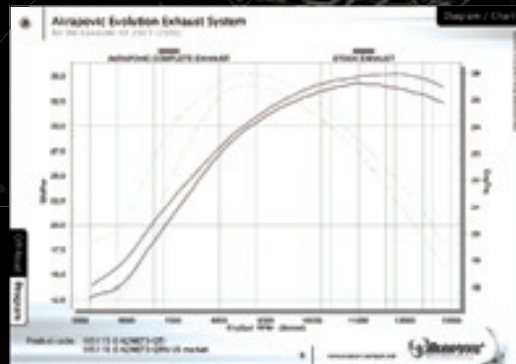
So there you have it! I feel privileged to have ridden this awesome bike before David goes off on his American adventure. The spec is amazing and I respect the amount of effort put in by Julian and the KTM factory to produce a unique and amazing race bike.

"Everything about this bike is for the corner," reckons D3-Racing's Julian Stevens



For our test the bike came with 48mm WP forks – DK's choice for extreme events





KNIGHT'S RIDE!

Build your own...

The spec of this bike is just about achievable but the technique and fitness required to ride it to its maximum are probably best left to the legend from the Isle of Man. I asked Julian for the spec of the bike and I expected a guarded response but I couldn't have been more wrong. So if you fancy building your very own replica of this factory machine here's what you will need according to Julian..

Brakes

"Pads are Brembo standard sintered and two size 48 Sidis. Rear disc standard vented or solid for mud, front disc floating 260mm in dry and solid team manufactured disc as tested for wet. Rear brake system completely stock, front brake system factory Brembo, standard hoses, normal fluid, never has problem with boiling, don't think he uses them to be honest."

Bars n' stuff

"Renthal Twinwall 966, low billet bar mounts for getting over the front and better cornering. Triple clamps totally factory with 18mm offset (20mm stock) for better turning. Everything about this bike is for the corner – nobody has greater corner speed than Knighter in WEC and stability is not a factor as he's so bloody strong he just gets his arse on the back mudguard and hangs on, eyes sometimes open! Clamps are for 52mm factory fork and use sleeves for smaller 48mm forks."

Wheels

"Axles completely stock, Talon carbon hubs and new A60 rims – please explain the wheels were new and we only had one set so we were saving them for pictures only and the Dirt Bike Show [okay – GW]. Tyres and mousses are Metzler six days extreme."

Rear shock

"Full-factory PDS, just the same as MXGP team but with custom settings for DK. It's serviced between D3 and WP technician Martijn Hendricks who supports us at all WEC events."

Front forks

"Normally full-factory 52mm babies with alloy sliders – WP are the only ones to use alloy lowers which allows for more compatible flex with upper tube and better feel. Two kilos lighter than stock, closed cartridge damping and set up very soft so loads of dive for quick turning. These units cannot be bought and DK has just four sets – approx value around £5000 each – two in England and two for WEC."

"The 48mm open cartridge units in the test bike are normally used for extreme events on his two-stroke or wheeling the beast about when our 52s are being serviced. These were the forks he used in '04 as a privateer, serviced and valved by D3. Factory 52mm forks have gone back to WP for scrapping as completely new forks coming for next season."

Motor

"The whole bike arrives at Triple-D Motorsport at the start of the season as a bog-stock production bike and then is built into a factory bike using as many genuine stock KTM parts as poss. Everything in the motor can be bought and made at Triple-D. Cylinderhead is standard cleaned up with titanium valves. Piston's stock and cylinder's shortened to suit shorter conrod which gives more instant throttle response. Engine retains standard electric start."

"Engines run for between 60-100 hours for major rebuilds – this engine is two years old now but chassis just one year. Every 10-15 hours or two-day British champs we check valve clearance and replace clutch plates (although they can safely do three races), oil and filters. Engine is very, very strong and we have never broken one yet – I think it could easily make 200-300 hours before it might pop."

"Standard compression, camshaft stock, timing slightly retarded – some say like the rider and at times his mechanic. Crankshaft is stock and the balance factor slightly altered to suit events – we have two types, one lighter crank at the start of season for sand races and a heavier one for traction on the slippery Welsh tests. And everything's lubricated by Motorex."

Clutch

"Stock plates and basket – only hydraulics change to new Brembo system as per new KTM two-strokes because DK likes the feel. Notice loads of free play so the engine never breaks traction in the corners, it's a trials thing and complete opposite to schoolboy technique where they never actually let the clutch out! Clutch cover's two-piece sand-cast so stronger and better for service work with better access to clutch plates. SX flywheel is lighter for quicker pick up and improves stopping and turning. Digital box with softer curve to mellow the thing but we have a more aggressive one should we need it! Ignition cover's billet for protection."

Carb

"A 41mm SX as opposed to 39mm tames the inherent low-end power and improves top-end. Jetting's very close to stock – just fine-tuned at each event – but the bike's not so sensitive and very rarely needs more than the mixture screw tuning or one clip on the needle."

Bits n' pieces

"The chain's Regina Z Ring as standard EXC looped around Renthal's best sprockets in cool anodized orange. The chain guide's solid nylon BRP for rock resistance in extreme tests. The frame and swingarm are totally stock and there are various bits of bling from KTM Hardparts catalogue. The radiators are from GMX just because they look cool and are reinforced just in case he ever steps off. MX hoses and no thermostat or fan kit – he don't get stuck!

"Seat's high foam with Sella Dalle Valle covers, fuel tank's a stock 8.5 litres, plastics by Acerbis, KTM quick-release plastic sumpguard and graphics by D3-Racing. There's a factory Akrapovic front pipe and silencer which keeps things down to 92db and David uses a USA-spec MXC six-speed gearbox – effectively close ratio motocross."



Talon carbon hubs are laced to A60 rims



Full-factory WP PDS rear shock is MXGP kit



Factory Akrapovic silencer keeps noise to 92db



Knight's ride – unbeaten in the '06 WEC

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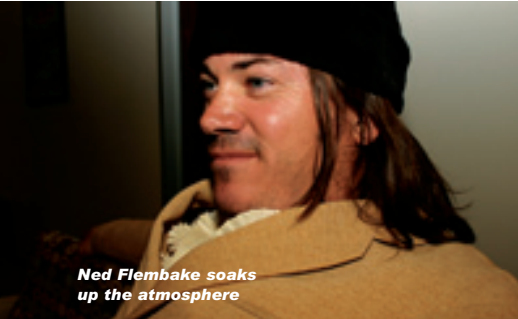
Kurt Nicoll
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Tenacious J
and Levi

GODFREY
FILMS

Look At THE NITRO CIR



Ned Flembake soaks up the atmosphere



Horned hands of rock – hardcore!



nitro circus 4

PREMIERE LEAGUE

Walker jets off to Sunset Boulevard in Los Angeles for the world premiere of *Lock 'n Load*, the latest flick from the Nitro Circus...

Words and photos by Geoff Walker



STREET
CIRCUIS

DBR TOWERS to London. London to Los Angeles. LAX to Hollywood. Holiday Inn to the Rainbow Bar on Sunset Boulevard... Easy!

Thousands of miles covered in the quest for the Hollywood premiere of the most eagerly awaited, off-road craziness film of the year – *Lock 'n Load*, the latest installment of the madness from Travis and his Nitro Circus. So there I was, sitting in one of the most famous 'rock' bars in the world having a beer with Tenacious J and watching some 60-year-old rocker playing air guitar to the beat of Def Leppard! Weird yet absolutely superb...

'Tenacious J' aka Jeremy Rawle aka Ned Flembake aka second fattest guy to do a back-flip (Streetbike Tommy is the fattest) was my meet and greet upon arrival and the excitement was building for the launch of the film. This is the first time the crew have put on this kind of event as the popularity of the films increase dramatically with each passing installment.

Everything seemed under control and TJ gave me an insight into the mindset of the Nitro Circus way of life. "The Nitro Circus Crew is all about people having fun, from all the guys at our company (Godfrey Entertainment) to Studio 411, to all the athletes and normal(ish) guys and girls who appear in the films. The cool thing about the crew is the fact that there is representation from many different shapes and sizes of people who are just out there enjoying themselves. That is what it is all about, having fun and getting a little crazy."

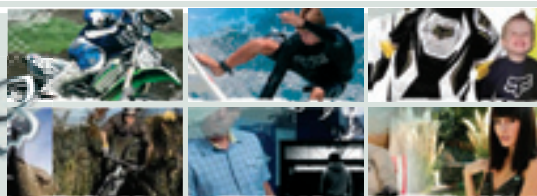
Greg Godfrey and Travis Pastrana are the directors of the film and this combination along with all-round production involvement from Jeremy makes for a winning combination. Almost everyone involved with Godfrey Entertainment is a rider of some description and this gives the films an honest edge as the passion for the sport and riding at all levels is respected.

I was lucky enough to go to Studio 411 for some pre-event interviews for motocross.com with Ned Flembake, Streetbike Tommy and Travis Pastrana. They just have fun at all times, fully in keeping with the spirit of the Nitro Circus.

Obviously, having Travis as a major player in all the films is a key but to have someone involved who is genuinely having a great time, all the time is uplifting to say the least. He really is a normal person with a gift of turning into something very special when he's placed anywhere near a moving vehicle of any type.

The premiere was an all-singing, all-dancing affair at 'The Day After' club with red carpet, entry photos and a legendary 'free bar'. The venue was buzzing and the film was introduced by Gregg Godfrey. The craziness had began...





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Studio

The film twists and turns, bending around supercross, Utah madness, the Pastrana compound, outdoor Nationals, Erzberg, X-Fighters, Redbull Romaniacs, X-Games and other ridiculous antics. The blend of entertainment is there for every viewer. There isn't too much of any one thing, the race footage is everything you would want to see and the quality of filming is top class. Sometimes I personally find the music overpowering on some of the American films but the crew have put together a great soundtrack and after talking to Jeremy about this side of the business, a lot of respect is due as it can take up to a couple of months to organize each track used in the film!

Standing at the back of the room while the film was on gave me a good view of the reaction of the people to what they were seeing. The oohs and ahhs coupled with cheers and rounds of applause through the entire film gave me the impression that everyone in that room was having a ball.

The film builds towards the moment of truth with Travis commentating on his thoughts and feelings as the 'double flip'

moment was arriving. That high level of emotion is captured on film and was put out into the room. This was an amazing experience for me as I could see Travis standing in the crowd, watching the film on the big screen, totally relaxed and enjoying everyone else's happiness as the reaction to the flip came as an ovation. It was quite a surreal moment and I won't forget it for a while.

To round up on the film I reckon it's as close to the complete off-road experience covering all tastes – from the mad to the sublime.

I want to thank Jeremy and Gregg at Godfrey Entertainment, Tommy 'P', Levis 'snow loony' Lavalee and the rest of the Nitro Circus crew as well as everyone at Studio 411 for the hospitality and a job well done. Also I would like to give massive thanks to Jason and the crew @ VANS UK for their hospitality over three mad days in LA! Absolutely legendary...

Oh yes, I nearly forgot, Team DBR/No Fear make a couple of very brief appearances in the film from the Redbull Romaniacs. Now that is pretty cool...



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bike test

*Tony hauls on the
RM-Z250 - two-stroke
handling meets
four-stroke power*

YELLOW FEVER!

DBR's chief test rider has never found the four-stroke Suzukis the most exciting bikes to ride - that is until he throws his little leg over the 07 RM-Z250 and finds himself breaking out into a sweat

Words by Tony Marshall Photos by Redeye



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CARDS ON the table time. The Suzuki four-strokes haven't been bikes I've been in a big hurry to test over the last few years. That's not because they've been bad bikes – far from it – but because I've found them, er, not the most exciting of the new wave of thumpers on the market.

The German GP track at Teutschenthal was a pretty long way to go to test a pair of four-poppers that I wasn't sure I was even going to enjoy riding. So it was a good job for me that the revamped RM-Z250 turned out to be a little beauty!

What a bike! While I enjoy riding four-strokes, my first love has always been eighth-litre strokers – even though the four-strokes are easier to ride for me at least you can't beat the feel of a light and snappy two-stroke. But the RM-Z250 is some fun bike to ride!

With it being the lightest 250 four-banger on the market it felt like I was riding the old 125 with 250Z performance. And what a combination! This bike just felt right from the beginning. With the track starting on the damp and greasy side in the morning I was finding grip where I was least expecting it. The RM-Z250 tracked well under load and felt like there was no grip going to waste.

With a very nice pull and great feel from the bottom coming out of turns all this motor wanted was to be ridden hard. Mid-range felt strong going through to the top-end with a nice spread of power which just seemed to go on and on. Gearing felt spot on and

with Teutschenthal being well-known as a fast track I never felt I was looking for gears.

The front end on this bike was awesome and as the track dried out I was starting to get a better feel for it as the damp parts of the track were a bit unpredictable early on. With four-strokes I've always found them that little bit harder to get into turns compared to a 125 – with that bit of extra weight and the transfer of power it tends to put more load on the front end which can help in some turns but not others. But with the RM-Z250 it just felt like I could turn this bike wherever and whenever I wanted.

The rear shock seemed just right for me too. It's not as if Teutschenthal was the roughest of tracks for our test but there were some big hard landings off some of the jumps which the shock simply soaked right up. And the rear shock also worked well coming into corners over some pretty bad-ass braking bumps.

So with the rear shock and front forks working well together this made the bike feel very balanced to suit the nice riding position.

Controls felt smooth and precise, the brakes were exactly what you'd expect on a modern Japanese motocrosser and Renthal bars as stock all add up to a great overall package.

Moving up now to the RM-Z450. It's a bike that's always been a bit of a mystery machine for me in the sense that it has a great feel to it – everything just feels right – until I



**IN TIMES OF CHANGE..
.. SOME THINGS STAY THE SAME**



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really try to pick up the pace and ride it hard!

It must have the strongest motor of all the 450s – it's soooo strong it feels like it's harking back to the old days of the 500s. The 450 runs a four-speed box but when out on the track this turns into a two-speed box! Confused? What I mean is that I've ridden this bike on both hardpack and sand tracks but I still only use third and fourth gears which to my mind means Suzuki have got it wrong.

With the motor being so strong I'm sure it's possible to make the gears a little wider apart so riders can make more use of the rest of the box. I know Suzuki are looking to suit all standard of riders but I've never been on a bike where I was double shifting in the air which put me into top.

The front end did feel a bit better than the '06 RM-Z450 but I seemed to struggle with keeping the front end where I wanted it in the turns – especially on the corners where I was

able to carry more speed. I really can't put my finger on it so I can't say whether I would need to soften or harden the spring rate – there are so many things this could be down to. But then again, what do I know – one of the fastest riders in the world rides one. I would like more time on this bike because I am sure there is room for improvement on the front.

The rear shock on the other hand felt spot on – no complaints there at all. It makes good traction coming out of the turns, is very stable over braking bumps and makes hard landings from even the biggest jumps feel like I was landing on the downside of a tabletop.

The clutch felt smooth with no fade or need for adjustment even when just playriding which is always hard on the clutch and the riding position feels the same as the 250 which I really like. And for '07 Suzuki have included a gripper seat as stock – one less aftermarket goodie to put on your Christmas list!



Spec

RM-Z250

Capacity: 249cc
Bore and stroke: 77mm x 53.6mm
Transmission: Five-speed
Carburettor: Keihin FCR 37
Front suspension: Showa 47mm USD (310mm travel)
Rear suspension: Showa (310mm travel)
Wheelbase: 1465mm
Seat height: 955mm
Dry weight: 92kg

RM-Z450

Capacity: 449cc
Bore and stroke: 95.5mm x 62.8mm
Transmission: Four-speed
Carburettor: Keihin FCR 40 MX
Front suspension: Showa 47mm USD (310mm travel)
Rear suspension: Showa (310mm travel)
Wheelbase: 1480mm
Seat height: 955mm
Dry weight: 100kg



SHOWPIECE!

Visitor numbers are slightly down on last year but 19,000 still make the annual pilgrimage to Stoneleigh Park for the Dirt Bike Show

Photos by Suttly

OKAY, SO the numbers were slightly down on last year's record-breaking event but organisers of the '06 Dirt Bike Show are still happy with the support they received from the paying public at Stoneleigh Park.

With the final figure expected to peak around the 19,000 mark – just 2,000 down on '05 – there was every cause for optimism at Promoto HQ in the face of a national downturn this year for similar events.

"The off-road market has been very flat this year so we had not expected to match last year's record

attendance," explains a Promoto spokesman. "Ticket sales have dropped back to the 2004 level which compares well to other national bikes shows that are down by over 10 per cent for the same period."

Thanks to newcomers including BMW and Arctic Cat and increased floor space, visitors to the show got even more for their money. And there was plenty going on in the Live Action Arena where demos by Steve Colley, the Xtreme Trials Kickstart competition featuring Graham Jarvis and Alexz Wigg and Gary Taylor's FMX show kept the crowd entertained.

And despite the drop in attendance – not helped by a wild, wet Friday that made driving conditions in the Midlands extremely difficult – the good news is the show went down well with the exhibitors and the public.

"Overall it was a positive experience," says Tony

Jakeman of BMW Motorrad UK, "and we definitely intend to come back next year." There was slightly less business-speak from Welsh MX rider 'Nellie' Evans. "Awesome," reckoned the Honda pilot from behind a mountain of show-bought bargains on the Sunday. "This is the first time I've come and will be back again next year. There's loads to look at and I reckon I've got most of the kit I need for next season now!"

The Dirt Bike Show will return to Stoneleigh Park again next year, running from November 22-25. For more information visit www.dirtbikeshow.co.uk

The brand-new four-stroke had trials fans flocking to the Beta stand as the previously top-secret bike was unleashed at Stoneleigh. The 250cc four-popper really looks the business – keep an eagle eye on DBR for an in-depth test real soon...

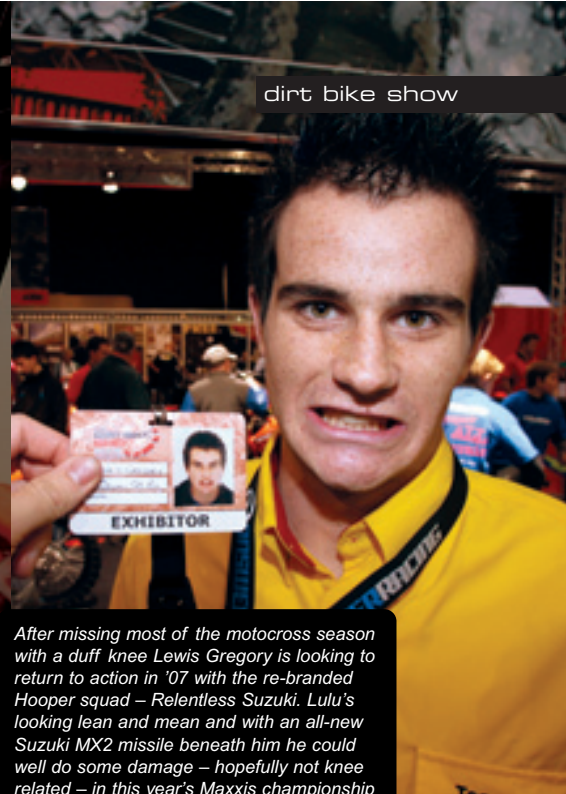
Gary Elston's former British championship title winning team Albion KTM make a return to the Maxxis series in '07 with Jordan Rose onboard a tricked out SXS450. With Gary being a bit on the shy side it's up to KTM UK's Shaun Sisterson to get his pic snapped with Jordan

Kawasaki UK's senior marketing executive Paul Cross says cheese on the green team's stand. Paul's right arm isn't actually bigger than his left, it's just a bit of camera distortion. Honest!

Colin, David, Nicky and the crew at CGH Imports had all the latest Pro Circuit and Works Connection goodies straight from the States. A Ryan Villopoto MXdN replica bike took pride of place on the CGH stand along with a professionally pimped CRF150



This is Craig Elwell from DEP pipes. He kinda looks like a very young version of Michael Caine. Not a lot of people know that. When he's not winning Alfie look-a-like contests, disliking birds with big hands or getting Carter, Craig's flat-out on the dyno making sure all his power producing products – including the new range of S7 pipes – are the very best they can be. Cushty!



After missing most of the motocross season with a duff knee Lewis Gregory is looking to return to action in '07 with the re-branded Hooper squad – Relentless Suzuki. Lulu's looking lean and mean and with an all-new Suzuki MX2 missile beneath him he could well do some damage – hopefully not knee related – in this year's Maxxis championship



Just how stupid would you have to be to hold up a blank pit board to a DBR photographer?



As well as plenty of '07 No Fear and Spy goodies and the Team DBR/No Fear Romaniacs totem pole of love, Phillip and the gang were proudly showing Brad Anderson's Pioneer race bike prior to it being shipped to Belfast for the Odyssey supercross



Did you know it's now illegal to fill a 20-litre jerry can at your local service station unless you have a special licence? Nope, neither did we until some jobsworth pump jockey refused to serve us. Apparently there's a five-litre limit which is where this Fro Systems five-litre jerry can comes in useful. It also works well as a hip flask for the mightier gentleman





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Malcolm Rathmell Sport had the updated range of Gaerne SG10s on show including these shocking pink and day-glo green versions



dirt bike show

Tristan Tunstall is Britain's main man when it comes to the UK minibike scene. Tristan's company Minibikepro.com has been around for five years – that's longer than the UK scene has existed – and it's still going from strength to strength today



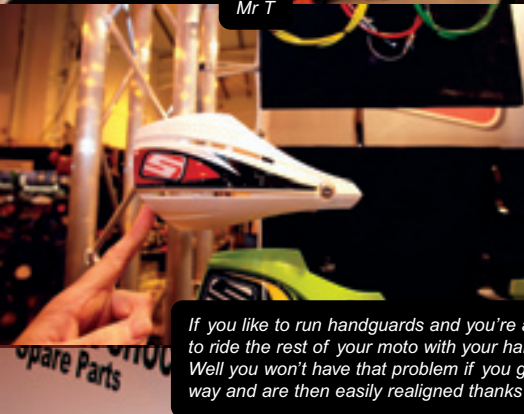
This is Matt Ramsey from CI Sport. Matt's holding the all-new dual material Renthal sprocket which combines the durability of steel teeth and the weight savings of an aluminum body



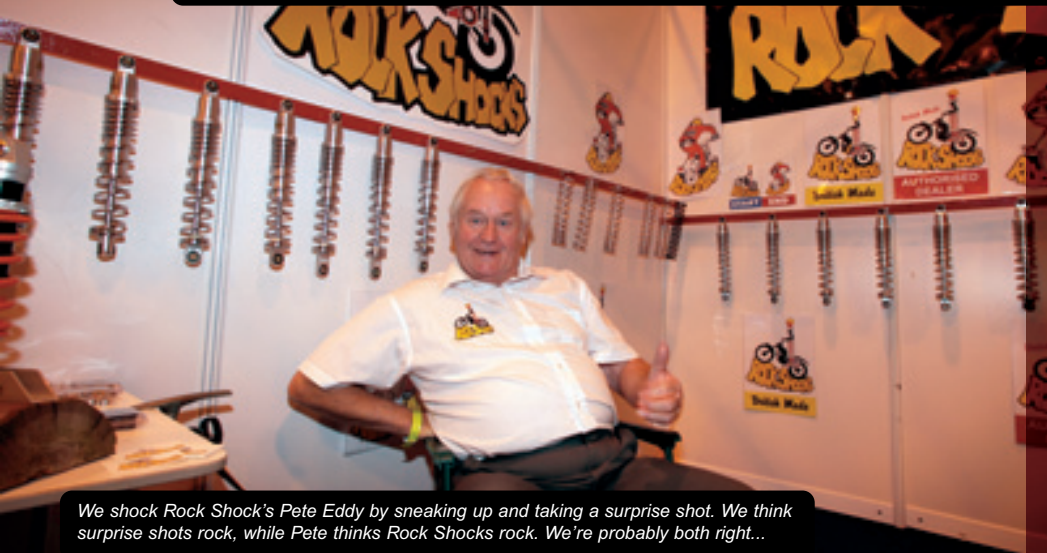
Bubba's MXdN helmet is carefully kept clear of sticky fingers on the Fox Racing stand



Mr T



If you like to run handguards and you're a bit of a crasher you'll know what a pain it is when you bin it then have to ride the rest of your moto with your handguards all skewwhiff and making the front brake stick on and stuff. Well you won't have that problem if you get some Sunline rotating handguards as these bad boys slip out of the way and are then easily realigned thanks to their ratchet style positioning system. Sweet!



We shock Rock Shock's Pete Eddy by sneaking up and taking a surprise shot. We think surprise shots rock, while Pete thinks Rock Shocks rock. We're probably both right...



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Paying homage to the CRF250 twin-pipe is this FMF version fitted to an RMZ450. The twin tail-pipes have been used all through '06 by off-road racer Ryan Hughes who claims they not only help produce more power but also smooth out that additional grunt. As you can see from the image the header pipe splits much closer to the exhaust port than on the CRF version.

Rush Racing are also now importing Lite Speed carbon products as well as EVS, FMF and One Industries. Speaking of One Industries, their ever popular Trooper helmet range is rumoured to soon include both Jacky Vimond and Ron Lechien replicas. Sweet!



With Molson Kawasaki's Tom Church being a tad on the fragile side it can only be a good thing he's renewed his contract with prime people-part protectors Sixsixone



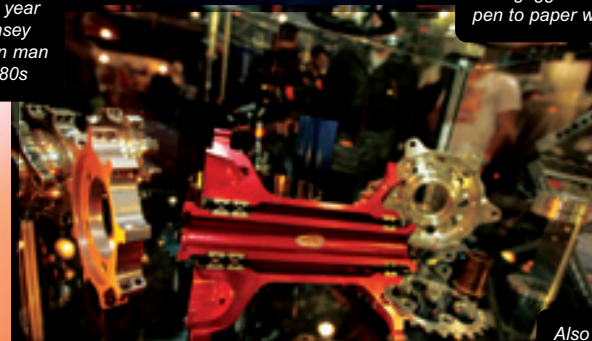
Two of the coolest things at the show this year were these acrylic paintings by Robert Kinsey who you may remember as being the main man behind Stadium Video Europe in the late '80s



Woody from Smith and Mark Jones aka Moe Szyslak shake on a goggle deal for the '07 season. MJ was also due to put pen to paper with Roger Magee's race team at the DBS



Limited edition, signed and numbered fine art Giclee prints on acid-free etching paper of both the Jim Pomeroy and Unadilla start paintings are available from the artist for a fee just shy of 50 notes. If you want one give Rob a call on 07890 981702



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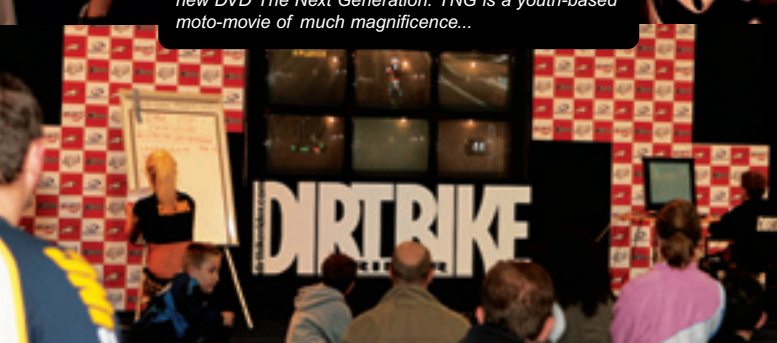
Also on the Talon stand was this Swift Sport Suzuki. Swift Sport is an all-new British team that will be running both Elliot Banks-Brown and Sean Hamblin in the '07 British and world MX2 championships



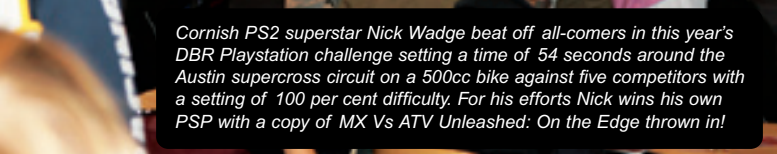
GSP Video's Gary Price was out and about pushing his new DVD The Next Generation. TNG is a youth-based moto-movie of much magnificence...



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Tommy Searle can ride a motocross bike faster than you (okay, maybe not you Carl). He also loves meeting people and signing autographs. Tommy has the best job in the world. Rock on Tommy!




Cornish PS2 superstar Nick Wadge beat off all-comers in this year's DBR Playstation challenge setting a time of 54 seconds around the Austin supercross circuit on a 500cc bike against five competitors with a setting of 100 per cent difficulty. For his efforts Nick wins his own PSP with a copy of MX Vs ATV Unleashed: On the Edge thrown in!



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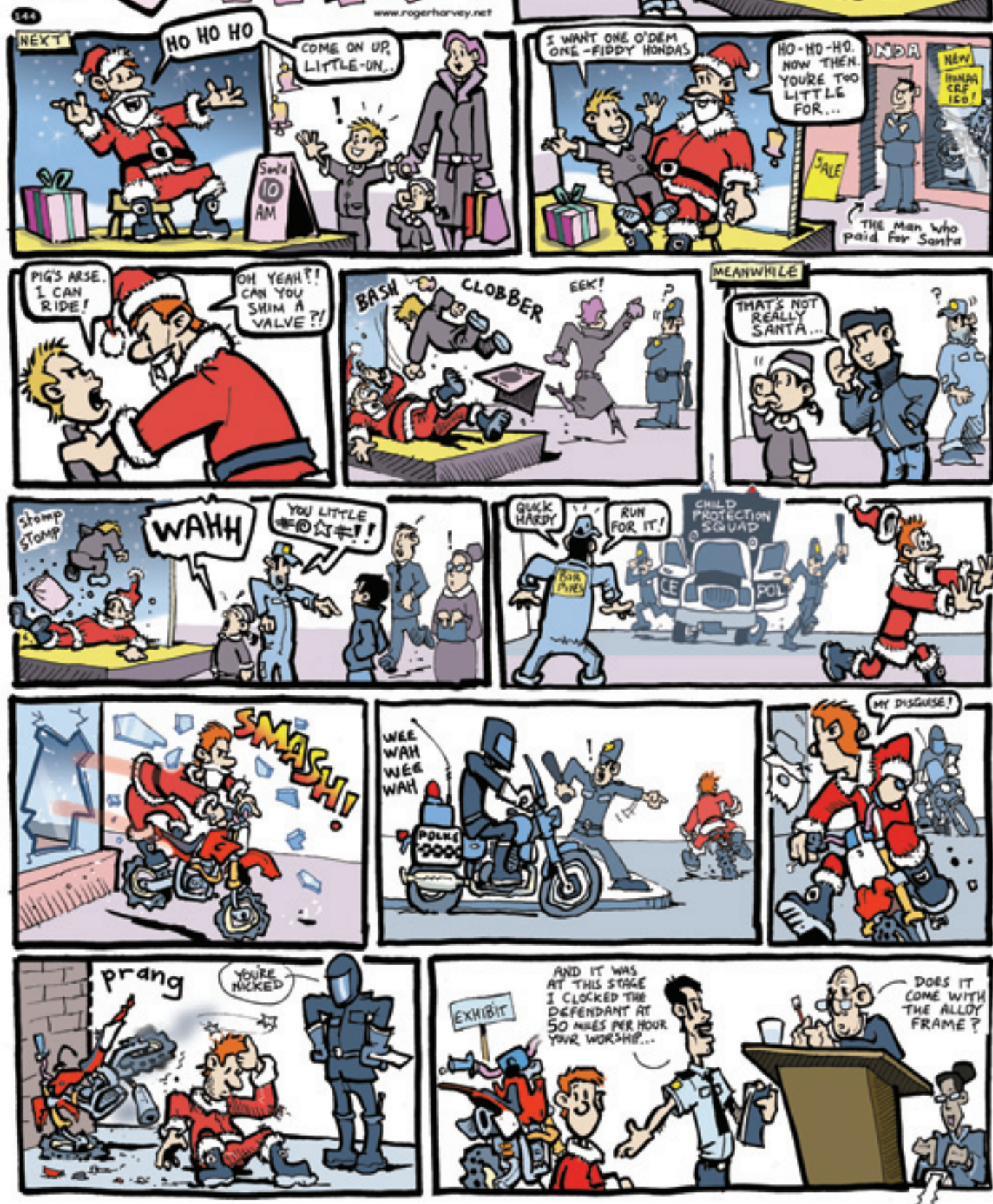




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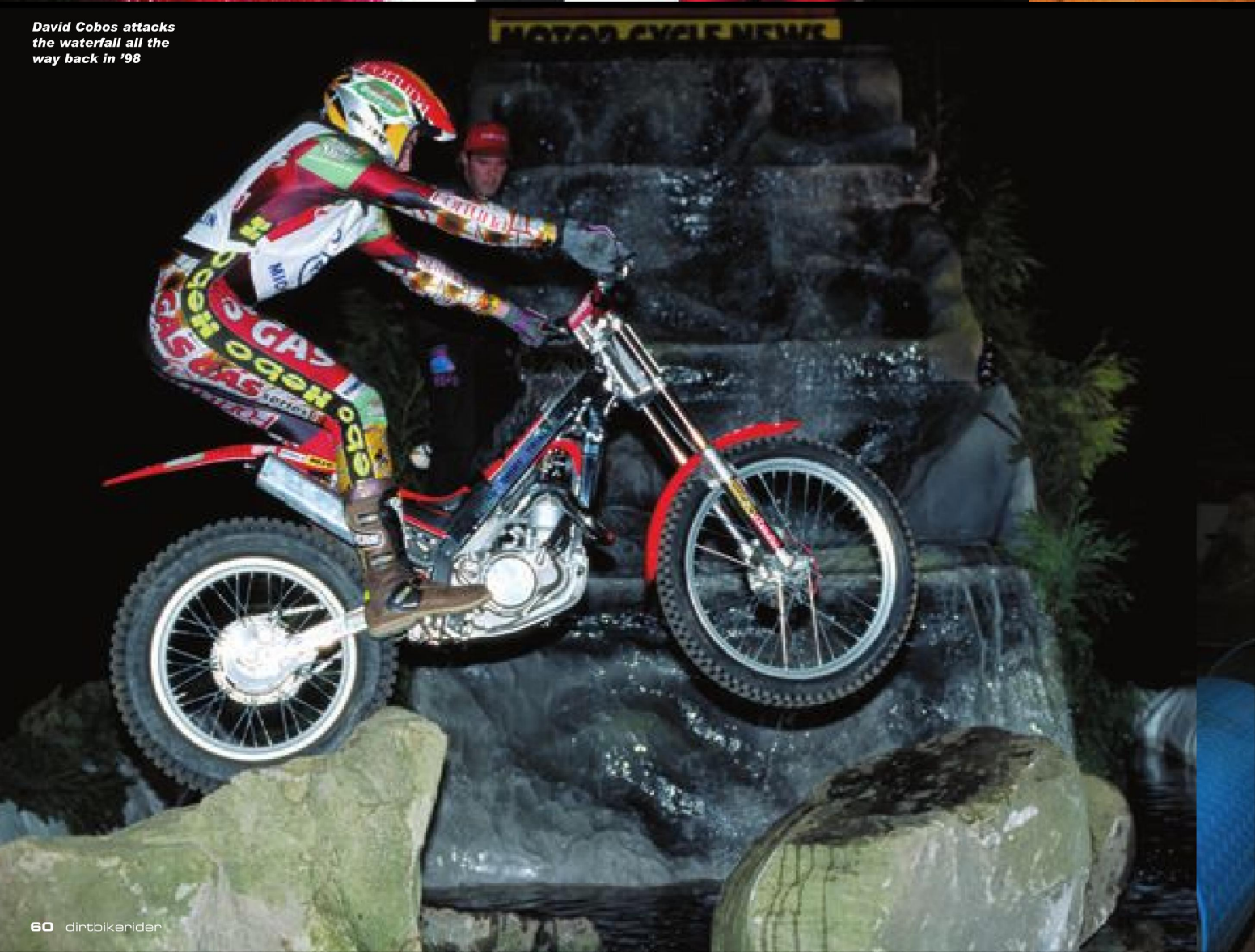


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*He hasn't won for a
couple of years but
Dougie Lampkin's
still King of Sheffield*

*David Cobos attacks
the waterfall all the
way back in '98*





FRIDAY 29TH December 2006 will mark the 12th edition of the world famous Sheffield Indoor Trial held at the Hallam FM Arena. While in more recent years UK-based supercross has come up short and failed to fill the sports stadiums it has visited, the smaller scene of trials has not missed a beat and has been without exception a complete sell-out for the last decade or so.

Running on a slightly earlier date than its traditional first Saturday in January slot, this edition of 'Sheffield' as it has simply become known within the trials community is no longer part of the official world series. Free from WITC restrictions – and without the burden of paying a heavy fee to the series promoters – Avondale Management have been able to spend their money more wisely. So not only have they invested in inviting the world's best riders, they've also added new ingredients to move the now well-established event forward.

In a city more famous for its tough steel worker image, it's perhaps unlikely that it's an elite bunch of lycra-clad men who have become almost as synonymous with this once industrial heartland as the cast of the 'Full Monty' film, both of which have helped firmly put South Yorkshire on the international map. And possibly equally unlikely is the long-standing partnership of Martin Lampkin and Neil Crosswaite who jointly are Avondale Management.

From the outside Crosswaite, ex-owner of a prestige car sales company, would not seem the automatic choice of business associate for the straight-talking ex-world champ Martin

STEEL WHEELS!

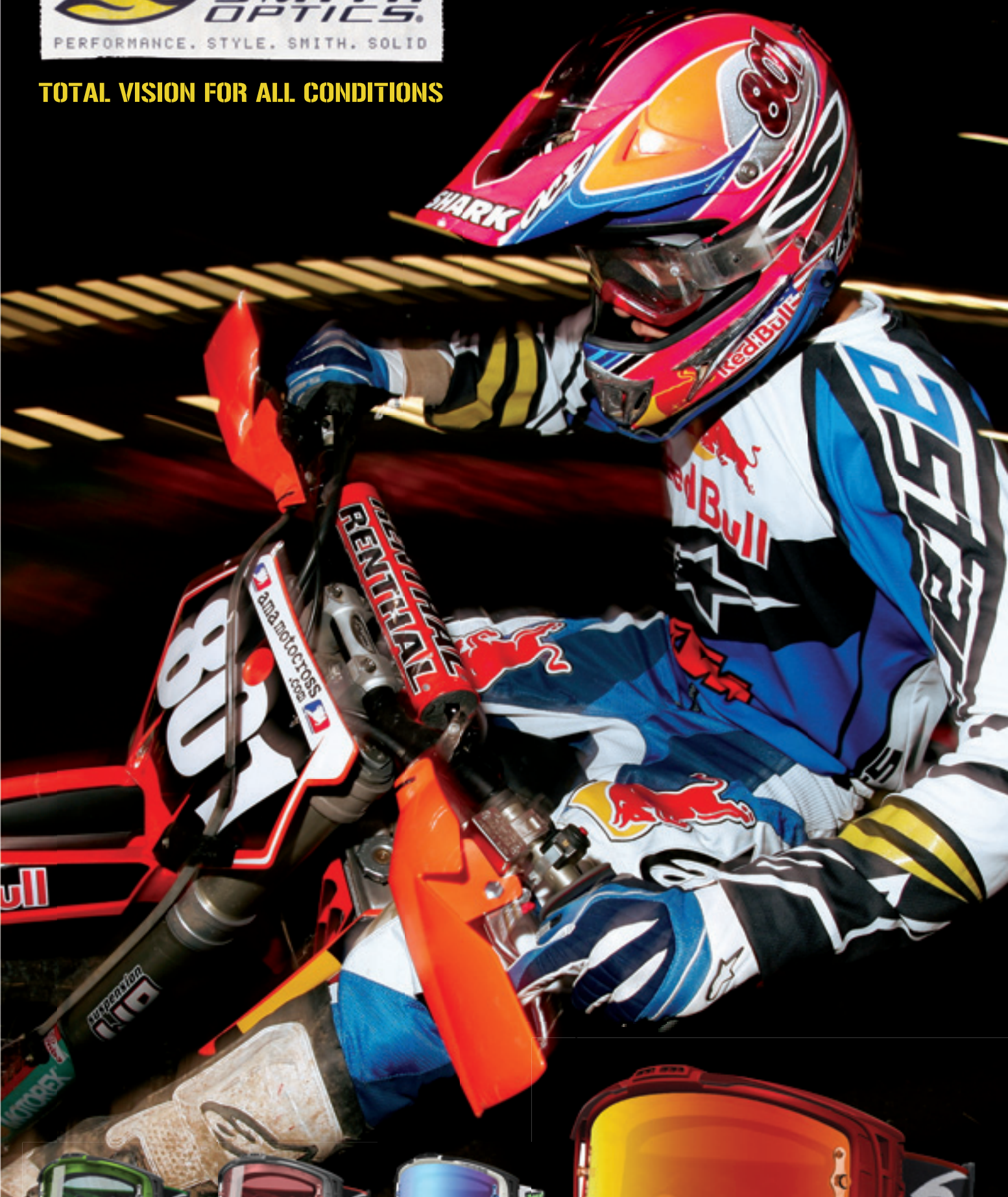
With the UK's premier arena event for feet-up fans just a few weeks away, we take a look at the history behind the Sheffield Indoor Trial

Words by g2f.co.uk Photos by Sutfy/Eric Kitchen



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Albert Cabestany takes
on Marc Colomer



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Lampkin. But their mutual strive for continued success has been the bond in a relationship where opinions are shot from the hip without the slightest hint of sensitivity.

A trip to the annual Gas Gas party at the back end of 1994 included a visit to the Girona indoor trial for Crosswaite. With his appetite whetted by this then new form of a sport in which his son Martin was a young pretender, Neil shared his thoughts with Martin who had an equal interest in developing the discipline in the UK with his own son Dougie also beginning to make his sporting mark. A simple raising of the half-filled pint glasses carrying Yorkshire's finest bitter signalled the agreement for these two men to forge ahead with their initial idea.

"Mart and I didn't agree on a lot back then," explains Neil, "but we both agreed that we needed to sign up Jordi Tarres if our plan was ever to get off the ground. We met with Tarres at the opening outdoor world round in Luxembourg early in 1995 and somehow

managed to get him to agree to a two-tier price that meant that he was only going to get his full whack if we sold all the seats. As it turned out we did sell all the seats and it was Jordi who ended up apologising to us as he got his full money despite failing to qualify for the final."

With Neil in charge of the paperwork and the financial negotiations, Lampkin set about finding a suitable venue to host Britain's first ever large-scale indoor trial. "Although Sheffield has become the home of indoor trials in the UK, it wasn't in our mind when we first started to look at suitable places. We travelled up and down the country and looked at places as diverse as a circus ring in Blackpool which could only seat 2,000 right through to a hall at the NEC that could have held 20,000 people. But somehow Sheffield seemed right. The steep seats give it great viewing and have helped to create a great atmosphere over the years."

Although behind the scenes of the first

edition Crosswaite admits it was 'absolute chaos', the show was an instant hit with the initial 8,000 fans who packed the arena to capacity to witness this new type of trials riding. Fittingly it was Martin's son Dougie who won the inaugural event to begin a seven-year winning run that still clearly leaves him as the undisputed King of Sheffield. While it was young Lampkin who walked off with the winner's trophy, it was Steve 'Showtime' Colley who won the hearts of the crowd with his amazing (stupid or brave could also be used to describe his action) jump across a 15ft gap mid-way through the railway sleeper section from almost a standing start.

That evening back in early January 1996 also marked the start of another special Sheffield relationship as cyclo trials wizard Ot Pi gave the UK public their first taste of what could be done on a small-wheeled bicycle with no seat when ridden by a sweating Spaniard. To describe his first performance at



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Kenichi Kuroyama
looks for the point of
no return in '98



Thanks to his wild riding
Steve Colley was always
a crowd favourite



Sheffield as unbelievable would not do justice to a routine that begun with a 12ft drop off on to the arena floor from a handrail no more than four inches wide.

"If the health and safety guy had had his way Ot's long association with Sheffield would have never begun," smiles Neil. "When Ot gave me the nod I hit the button for the music as he stood hard on his pedals nearly taking the guy with him who was frantically waving his hands around saying 'no, no, no'."

Although it was only ever going to be a one-off, plans were soon in place for year two as Sheffield fever had gripped even the usually conservative trials audience. The addition of sponsorship from Pace Satellite Systems meant that a slightly more understandable Steve Berry of then BBC Top Gear fame could now replace the initial French commentator borrowed from Bercy. The TV presenter fronted the next four editions of Sheffield as the event

grew and grew in status, attracting more serious tobacco sponsorship along the way.

"If it wasn't for Tony Blair we might still have Embassy as a sponsor," says Neil. "We had five good years with them on board – with the extra money they put in the pot we were able to invest in big video screens, proper lighting and bigger and better sections."

Michelin tyres have also enjoyed a long association with Sheffield as sponsors of the spectacular high jump and the now famous double quarter pipe that has provided the fitting finale to many a duel. However, their most memorable moment probably came in 1999 when they supplied the then biggest tyre in the world to form part of a section. Standing at over 14ft high it was one mighty piece of rubber that proved to be just too much for Fujinami's factory two-stroke Montesa that snapped clean in half as the mad Japanese rider launched himself to the ground from the highest point.

Undefeated at Sheffield until 2003, Dougie returned to the top spot again in 2004 but has been without a win since being four-stroke mounted. Wildcard rider Antonio Bou was last year's sensation as he grabbed a dramatic last race victory from Adam Raga.

These three guys will be in action again this time around and will be joined by the equally formidable duo of Takahisa Fujinami and Albert Cabestany – both ex-world champs – plus Britain's own reigning European champion James Dabill. Ot Pi has now been pensioned off but is replaced by eight-time world champ Marc Vinco. If this rich history of drama and excitement is anything to go by then this a show that shouldn't be missed.

Tickets for this year's Sheffield Indoor Trial are available by calling **0114 256 5656** or by hooking up to the official event website at **www.indoortrials.com**

We'll see you all there...

James Dabill is back
at Sheffield for '07



Marc Freixa crests
a rock in '04



Simon Lane ended the '05 season as AMCA Open class champion

Clinton Barrs is young and full of confidence



RELATIVE VALUES

Brothers in arms and cousins in conflict, the Lane and Barrs families are riding high at the top of the AMCA ranks

Words and photos by Mike Wood

A DECADE before he won the 2005 AMCA Open class championship Simon Lane came within half-a-second of realising every British MX privateer's dream and qualifying for a place on the startgate of a home MX GP. The year was 1995 and the scene was the famous Foxhill Moto Parc where Simon rolled up armed with a highly-tuned De Groot motor in his Honda and big support from family and friends,

"I put so much preparation into the event," says 33-year-old Simon, his eyes misting over, "that I was extremely disappointed to just miss the cut." Simon could have done a full season of GPs in '95 but financially found it impossible to compete with the elite. "We were sent entries for every round but with meetings in just every corner of the world Foxhill and Germany were the best we could do."

Simon's career began at the age of 12 with the Cotswold Youth Club at Stockwell before he progressed into the BSMA Nationals. And even at this stage he was already looking further up the motocross tree. "I always seemed to get in the top five or six. Back then it was more of a fun weekend and in the back of my mind I was focussed on something far bigger in the motocross picture."

Moving into the adult ranks, Simon entered the ACU Junior Challenge series and eventually finished third – a result that fast-tracked him into the main ACU championship top 40. "The pace was so fast and it was a big eye-opener for me but I was confident in my own ability and really gave it my best shot."

Finding strong results increasingly more difficult to achieve – his best in the Brit champs was an eighth at Foxhill – and with the rest of his family already involved in the AMCA, Simon soon made the switch to the amateur ranks. "I got fed

Battling brothers Simon (left) and James Lane



up of not winning and only being able to record midpack finishes. My career appeared to have come to a halt – I was making no progress – so I needed a fresh challenge to feed my motocross hunger."

Entering the AMCA, he had to do a full season of club meetings before qualifying for a championship place. "Initially I got a big shock. ACU riders were always knocking the AMCA – myself included – but when I got there I could not believe the pace of the front runners. In the AMCA the races are shorter so it's flat-out on the gas from start to finish. Everybody expected me to win coming from the ACU British championship and some people even showed resentment towards me saying that I was just a trophy hunter. However, there were also plenty of good guys also with the opinion that it was great that some fresh blood had joined their association."

Contesting the AMCA 125cc championship, Simon never won the title but came mighty close during an incredible finish to the 2002 season. At the last round of the series – held at Simon's home club track at Bromsberrow – championship rivals Jonathan Slesser and Patrick Crump both crashed out. Suddenly it was mathematically possible for Simon to snatch the crown and cheered on by hoards of local



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Elliot Barrs came close to clinching the '06 Open class crown



supporters that dream appeared to be on when he hit the front in the final moto. But Slesser's team-mate – a certain Brad O'Leary – got in front just before the flag to deny Simon the title.

"Man, you could not describe my feelings that day. From being able to suddenly turn what appeared a certain third overall into a potential title winning situation, then being passed on the final lap of the last moto and having my dreams shattered. I felt very bitter and angry. My team and supporters were equally distraught but they all believed in my ability and knew my chance would come again."

After missing out on the title and having raced 125cc two-stroke bikes for 14 years on the trot, Simon needed a change. And with the 250cc class having just been scrapped by the AMCA he decided to go straight onto a 510cc Husqvarna four-stroke.

"That was a massive change and I really struggled on the big Husky. Realising that my results were not up to scratch, I switched to a Honda 450F and although my performances did dramatically improve it still took me 12 months to get back to anything approaching my best. At first I felt that I had made a major mistake and had I been made an offer would have jumped back on the 125cc at the very first opportunity. Now, though, I feel a much smoother rider and really enjoy the power of the 450F."

While Simon was changing classes, his younger brother James was just beginning to make a name for himself in the 125cc AMCA championship. Starting at 16, James went straight into the AMCA ranks and took another

seven years to move from Junior to Expert and then qualify for the championship.

During his early championship outings James actually had a chance to compete against his brother. "Initially I found the pace very fast and was just trying hard not to get

my first championship year I really struggled to make the top 20."

So does the 28-year-old – the '06 British Masters Amateur 125cc champion – feel like he's constantly riding in his big brother's shadow and, as a consequence, under

increased pressure to perform. "It's certainly better now we are riding in separate classes and over the last three seasons people are now sitting up and taking notice of James Lane the motocross rider.

"When we were riding in the same races at local club events I never got credit for even finishing second behind him. However, Simon has always looked after me and helped me gain some super sponsors along the way."

Indeed, Simon and James are a sponsor's dream, always ensuring that the family race transporter is strategically parked in the paddock area of every event to help guarantee that their full range of sponsors and supporters gain maximum publicity.

Simon's personal sponsorship package has increased after lifting the 2005 Open class championship. "Winning was simply an amazing feeling and all those years of hard work eventually appeared worthwhile. I received so many text messages from friends and fellow riders that I printed them out and put them in a frame."

Although now at the wrong end of his career, Simon's still fired up for further success – and the people who point out his advancing years just make him more determined. "Every

At 33 Simon Lane is approaching 'elder statesman' status



lapped by the leaders. Simon along with Gary Davies and a whole load of others simply amazed me with their speed and I could not understand how they managed to maintain their rapid pace for the whole moto."

But gradually James has definitely improved as a rider. "I have now competed in five seasons of championship racing and my results have got better every year. In 2005 I finished fourth overall and qualified for a place in the British IMBA European championship team – during



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James Lane picked up the '06 British Masters 125cc title



time someone says that I am too old or past my best the comments just fire me up to race and train even harder."

And he still fancies his chances with the young guns down in the 125cc division. "I would still be capable of mixing it with the front runners. When that final chequered flag does come down on my own career I am already making plans for the future and will run my own AMCA motocross race team. Funds allowing, I want it to be as professional as a top ACU set-up and I hope my brother James is still racing because when he sorts out his fitness he's certainly a major threat. This would be a new and exciting move for me."

While the Lanes look set to remain loyal to the AMCA ranks, two of their West Country championship rivals have their sights firmly set on moving to ACU top class racing.

Cousins Elliot and Clinton Barrs from Bristol are currently setting the amateur ranks alight with their no-nonsense, all-action riding. And both have already tasted ACU action with Elliot – second in the '06 Open class championship – in particular sampling a very high level in the British U21 championship in 2003.

"When I went into the Under 21s I just wasn't prepared enough for adult racing," admits Elliot, "and because I didn't get the results I expected I quickly became dejected and decided to totally quit racing."

But after giving the sport a rest the desire to compete quickly returned just four months later. "I thought I would give a 250cc bike a try so I called Steve Dixon. Purchasing a Yamaha 250cc two-stroke, I went into the AMCA, won 26 races in a row and so got the love for motocross back again."

Having now raced with both the ACU and AMCA, the 23-year-old feels he could have a serious crack at the Maxxis championship and possibly break into the top 15. "I don't think the ACU lads are unbeatable and if you take out of the equation the GP regulars it becomes a lottery that anyone could win. With the correct mental and physical preparation I'm sure I can mix it with them in the future."

Even though Elliot is currently performing in the amateur ranks, he already adopts – like many – a professional approach. "My training regime probably isn't much different to most ACU lads – riding mid-week, in the gym at least

two or three times while incorporating a good healthy diet."

Joining Elliot in the Barrs camp is his 20-year-old cousin Clinton who's already looking a hot prospect – if he applies himself. "He has better raw speed than me," admits Elliot, "but in the past he's been inconsistent and not as fit as he should be. When he's dialled in though he will smoke anyone!"

Like Elliot, Clinton also started competing at the tender age of six but he certainly enjoyed far more success in the youth ranks including a great third overall in the KWS 125cc class behind Ollie Sandiford-Smith and Tommy Wright.

Moving into adult racing, Clinton's already had the chance to sample both 250F and 450F Yamahas – and he rates the baby blue as his favourite. "The 250F handles really well and because I feel so comfortable on it I can really hang it out. In comparison the 450F is a lot smoother and easier to ride allowing me to just sit there, open the throttle and enjoy."

Despite being an established small bike rider, the chance to compete on a 450F came when he was selected to ride alongside Elliot in the British round of the IMBA European Open class championship at Cleobury Mortimer. Showing his undoubted natural ability, Clinton posted a 4-3-7 scorecard for fifth overall on his 450F debut.

Young and full of confidence, Clinton doesn't hesitate when asked who's the better rider – himself or his cousin. "I knew this question was coming and, yes, I am the better rider. We both definitely race to win and if I had to block-pass him on the final corner of a race to get past the chequered flag first I would do whatever was necessary."

As far as the future goes, both Barrs would like to copy Simon Lane and get their hands on an AMCA title and then move into the ACU Maxxis championship – and both feel the recent influx of ACU riders into the AMCA will raise the pace and help to fulfil their ambitions.

"The AMCA series has got faster and will be the place for young rising stars of the future but the AMCA must also work harder to bring fresh ideas and better quality venues into their premier series," adds Elliot. "More money – which the association certainly has – must be made available to promote the series properly and attract more sponsors and, ultimately, an increase in paying spectators."



Cousins Clinton (left) and Elliot Barrs



was armed with his mum's Kodak Brownie camera. After art college he mixed life as a graphic designer, magazine art director, photographer and part-time art college tutor with motocross and photo-journalism. Now he's a commentator, painting pictures with words. He never did get a proper job...

JACK BURNICLE is the godfather (our words, not his) of British MX journalism. Born in Billingham, County Durham, to Bella and nutty (his words, not ours) musical genius Stan Burnicle, Jack was mad about cars and motor racing as a kid. At sweet 16 he got a motorbike, rode it to a local 'scramble' and was instantly, hopelessly hooked. Next time he went he

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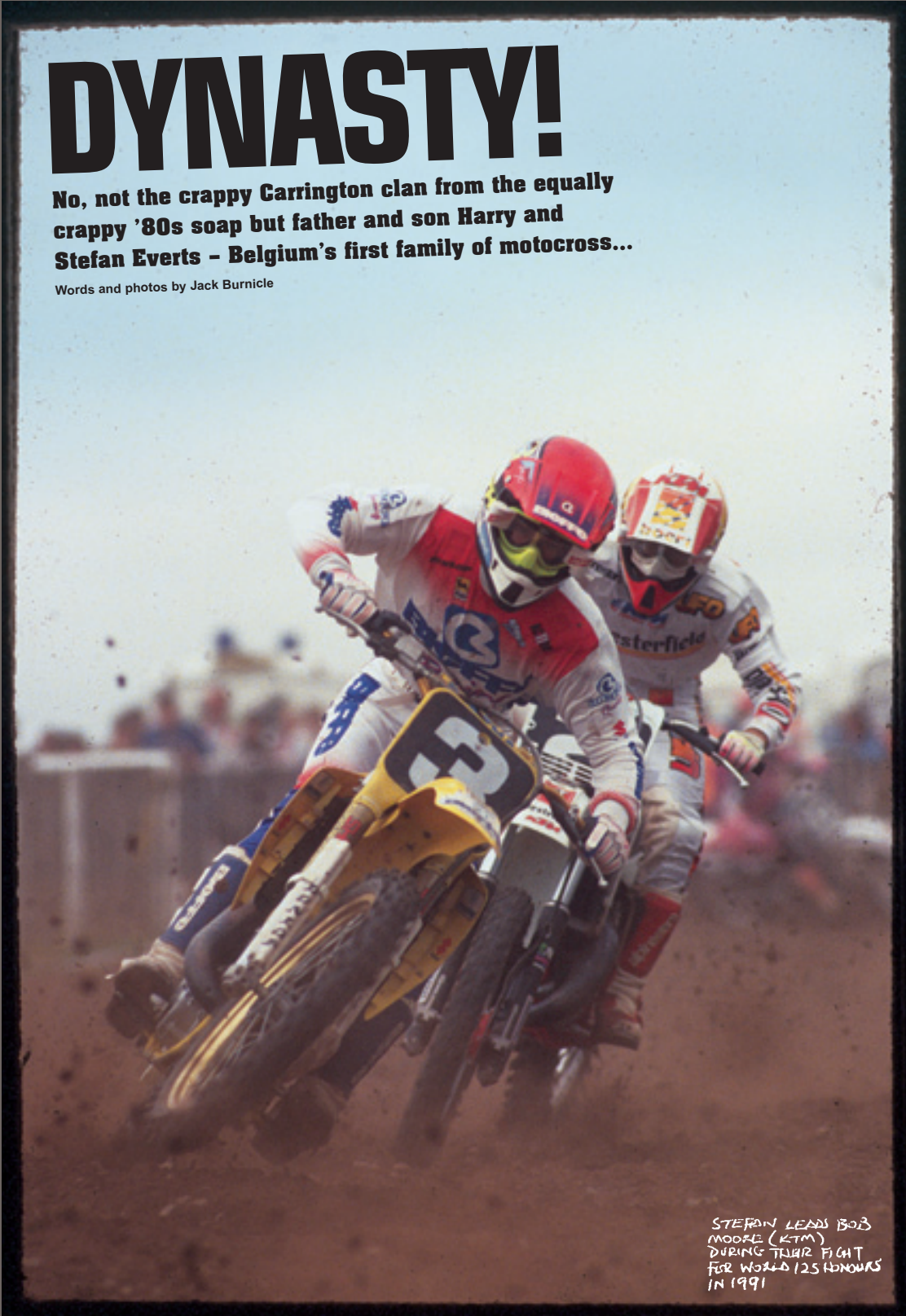
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DYNASTY!

No, not the crappy Carrington clan from the equally crappy '80s soap but father and son Harry and Stefan Everts - Belgium's first family of motocross...

Words and photos by Jack Burnicle



STEFAN LEADS BOB MOORE (KTM) DURING THEIR FIGHT FOR WORLD 125 HONOURS IN 1991

HOW THE hell did he do it? Stefan Everts signed off his grand prix career with a further bout of record-shattering superiority in 2006.

His astounding levels of motivation and fitness demoralised his younger challengers. Only immensely experienced Josh Coppins managed to master Everts all season. But of course Stefan was a kid once, headed for his first world championship in 1991 aged 18.

One man there then and back at his side 15 years later was his dad, Harry. Shy, disabled and shockingly hard, Harry Everts had himself won four world titles – the first on a 250 Puch in 1975 and three 125cc crowns for Suzuki from 1979 through 1981.

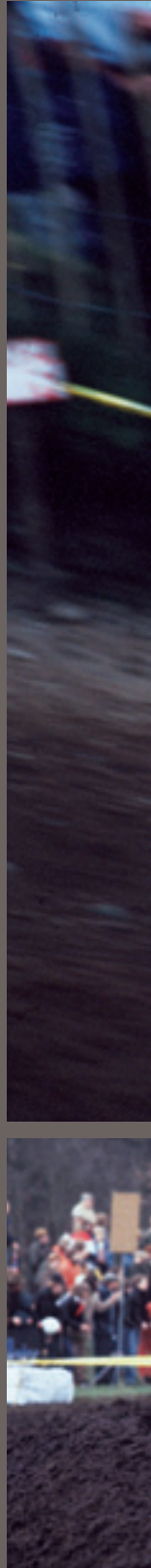
I met up with this close-knit family unit at Hatherton Hall, Nantwich, during their ultimately triumphant 1991 season. Stefan rode for Suzuki then. Tall and slim with a

thick, wavy black mullet and a dead ringer for his pretty mum Francine, he had a tough act to follow.

Harry had also been born into the MX fraternity learning almost everything he knew from his uncle – original Belgian sand king Jos Teuwissen. Harry attended races from the age of six, meeting childhood heroes like Jeff Smith and Dave Bickers. He trained in his early teens with Teuwissen – on a 500 Maico – and started racing at 15.

Joel Robert, the Belgian icon whose records inspired Stefan, spotted Harry's talent and sent him over to America in 1969 (see, nothing ever really changes) with a 125 Dalesman Puch that Joel picked up from Pete Edmondson at the Brighton Show!

Harry returned to contest 250 GPs winning his first at Hyvinkaa, in Finland, in 1974 and clinching his 250 world



HARRY EVERTS WINS
SUZUKI'S LAST EVER
500 GP MOTO IN THE
1983 FRENCH ROUND
AT IFFENDIC



ROCK HARD!
HARRY EVERTS WINS
THE OPENING 125 GP
OF 1980 AT NORG,
IN NORTHERN HOLLAND

crown at the same circuit 12 months later.
"Sand track, eh?" he grinned. "I always love
sand track!"

After a spell in the doldrums with Bultaco,
Everts replaced triple world 125 champ Gaston
Rahier at Suzuki. The man responsible for this
resuscitation of Harry's career was current
Suzuki GP boss – and their original GP rider
alongside Robert – Sylvain Geboers.

Three titles later, Everts was deposed by
Sylvain's kid brother Eric and turned to 500s in
1983. There he won Suzuki their last ever 500
GP motos in Sweden and France and finished
fourth overall behind Hakan Carlqvist, Andre
Malherbe and Graham Noyce.

Harry and Francine had married young

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and never pushed their only son but Stefan always wanted to be with them at the races. "Just brmm, brmm," smiled his mum, "only bikes and motocross!"

From an early age Stefan absorbed advice from his father. "I always told him never to take the same line in corners," explained Harry proudly. "Always do what nobody else does. Learn the difficult things. And remember what can happen. You can hurt yourself. Think about what you do. When you make a small crash and have pain, this is normal. You cannot come and say 'look, papa'. I feel nothing. I have so many things happen to me (like polio as a child – hence his limp). Normal. Nix!" Harry shrugged his shoulders and shook his head emphatically. "He cannot stop in a race and say 'this is kaput'. He can only stop for real problems!" With a father like Harry, you begin to glimpse the seeds of his son's extraordinary achievements.

American stars reached European shores and blitzed a Belgian team (including his dad!) at Lommel in the 1981 Trophee des Nations. The boy altered his handlebars and approach. Johnny O'Mara became his hero.

Stefan didn't race himself until 1988. Like Harry, he was 15. But would he inherit Harry's notoriously volatile temperament? "One moment Harry is scowling, the next moment singing and dancing," Francine sighed sweetly. "If one thing is wrong, he thinks everything is wrong. So I always think positive and talk positive to Stefan so he thinks like that too."

Her son's riding style she found surprisingly similar to Harry's. "Some movements he makes, when he is coming out of corners." Harry himself saw a strong resemblance to Britain's ex-world champion Dave Thorpe. "Thorpe was a very good rider," reckoned Harry who raced a 500 GP season against DT. "Smooth. When he was with Honda he was the best."

Stefan started 125 GPs with the Bieffe Suzuki team (Sylvain Geboers again!) in 1989 alongside experienced Dutchmen Davey Strijbos and Pedro Tragter. "It was my learning year." He broke a scaphoid and finished 15th. In 1990 US newcomer Donny Schmit replaced Strijbos and won from Bob Moore and Everts. "Schmit had factory bikes," claimed a steely-eyed Stefan. "Me and Tragter had special parts. Then in 1991 it was me and Donny."

Father and son had not gelled well in Stefan's formative GP years. "I was hard," admitted Harry. "I always think when it's raining, it's the same for everybody. My mechanic must work in it too. I tell Stefan you must be happy about this and say, 'I win in the rain'. When you are not hard on yourself you will not be champion. So Stefan is hard on himself. I tell him you have it not for nothing. When you have pain today in training it is going more easy in GPs."

Stefan practised supercross and started working with his dad's old physical trainer, 41-year-old policeman Willie Linden. "He was a very big help to me," said the cool, calm teenager. And his relationship with Harry matured. Both blamed themselves for those turbulent teens though, typically, Harry being Harry I was only allowed to speak with father and son separately!

"Early in my career, we would fight," admitted Stefan sheepishly. "He would say 'this is not good. Do like this'. Now is better. I listen to him more!"

Harry, in turn, knew he'd backed off. His son was smarter than he thought. "I am more understanding," he confessed, tapping a knowing temple. "He knows what to do. Last year I was a bit too hard. Now, if I see a mistake, I ask him one day later. On the day,



STEFAN EVERTS
ROOSTING TO HIS FIRST
WORLD TITLE IN 1991
ON THE BIEFFE SUZUKI

he knows he's made a mistake and is already angry with himself." Harry smiled coyly. "But now he doesn't make so many mistakes. Always correct!"

Stefan won the opening moto of 1991 in Italy but counted round four, in Hungary, as the turning point. "Donny was okay when he was the fastest rider but after I beat him in the first moto he was so nervous. He went too fast in the second – crazy everywhere – and crashed. He could not believe that somebody, so quickly, could be so much stronger!"

KTM's Bob Moore took up the chase. Stefan won in Switzerland and Belgium. Moore retaliated at Nantwich in the UK and at Killinchy in Northern Ireland. Then four wins on the trot in South America helped Everts still three months short of turning 19 clinch his first world championship before the final moto of the series in Japan.

He prepared to move directly into 250 GPs in 1992 and was keen to race something even

bigger. "I tested a 500," he enthused eagerly. "Such fun to ride. Not working hard, just wah, wah. Let the bike do the work. So much power!"

Already, with the pounding encouragement of a father who might have broken a lesser spirit, Stefan Everts had revealed a possible career path. He'd be a brilliant, rock hard all-rounder, just like his dad. And motocross would never be quite the same again!



WINNING TEAM! FRANCINE, STEFAN + HARRY
EVERTS AT NANTWICH'S BRITISH 125 GP IN 1991

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RONNIE RENNEN



In '02 at Castiglione

BLUE BOTTLE!

Dropped by KTM after winning their only MX world title in '06, Yves 'Fly' Demaria is back with Yamaha and determined to prove a point...

Words and photos by Alex Hodgkinson

EVEN A world title is no guarantee of a job anymore! But Yves Demaria, at 33 world champion for the second time and the winner of more GPs than any other Frenchman in history, didn't find himself on the dole for long as Yamaha – the marque he started his career with back in the '80s – snapped him up for the fourth time.

"I still don't know what happened at KTM – they stopped with me," frowns Yves with that inveterate air of apparent indifference. But you can see that being discarded as champ hurts.

Yves is a proud man who has rarely been given to public outbursts but who knows his value and, typically French, does not suffer fools or a lack of loyalty lightly. He had just won KTM's only 2006 world title in motocross when they

rang him, not to say thanks but to file divorce papers.

"It was a difficult decision for me to accept and I had a worrying week. Then after a few days Pit Beirer said he would try to sort something out but they never came back to me again. They never even gave me a reason. I don't know where they get these stories about me retiring – I always wanted to continue to race and I never changed my mind. It was they who told me it was better I stop.

"I have to admit that it was difficult in Jacky Martens' team. We had no problem on a personal level but my mechanic and me were the only French-speaking members of the team and I was aware that Jacky showed a preference for Sven (Breugelmans).

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"But now I have a new challenge. I am happy to be back on Yamaha. This is the fourth time around for me. I started my career with Yamaha, I rode with Rinaldi in the '90s, then in the 250s in 2001 and now again. I have had to set up my own team but I have full technical support from Rinaldi."

It took Yves a long time to win his first world title in 2004, 15 years after he burst onto the GP scene at the same time as Stefan Everts with a long mane of tangled blond hair and a dynamic style which had his MX-crazy homeland promoting him as the natural successor to Vimond and Bayle.

Initially, the phenomenally fast 'Fly' struggled to find the discipline to complete two motos in a day and an early season points deficit cost him the 125 crown in '93. "If I had had the mental attitude 10 years earlier then for sure I would have won more titles. Remember 1994 when I won six GPs – as many as Albertyn and Everts together – but I had too many DNFs at the start of the year. But that's life. It's something which comes with maturity. Experience is very important in this sport."

"I could always be strong for one day but in my younger days I could never maintain that for a complete season. Even in 2001 when we won the Nations. It was a great experience but just typical of me. Me, David (Vuillemin), Luigi (Seguy), we were all strong that day and that was why we won. We did what French teams with several world champions have not achieved and I am proud of that."

And Yves could perform on any bike. Like

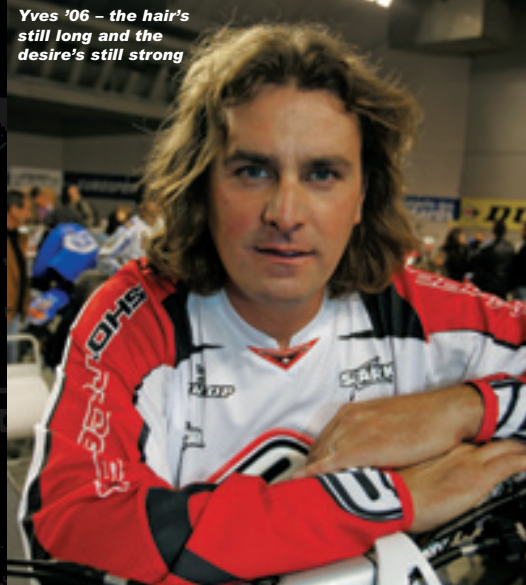
Everts he has won GPs for all four Japanese marques but not only that, he's also done it on KTM and Husky! Undisputed winner of the inaugural MX3 world championship in 2004, injury cost Yves the title in 2005 but he led the series all the way last summer.

"The first half of the season went perfectly. I was losing the odd moto but I was controlling the points lead. You know, I had to ride smart and settle for second sometimes rather than take risks because those early races it was just me and Sven. When you win a moto then you gain just three points on the second guy but if you throw away a moto with a stupid mistake you need nine motos to cancel that out. That's a lot of pressure."

"Then in July in Markelo I hurt my left knee. I twisted it and had a problem with the meniscus. I needed a small operation to clean it up after the Nations and it was not so bad that I couldn't get through those last few races but I had three races on successive weekends – my knee needed a couple of weeks rest but I had to race. With a month off after that to the final GP at Roggenburg everything was back to normal. Those three races were a lot of pressure but I handled that and the title was mine again."

"Sven and I were pretty close all year. He improved a lot during his championship year and he was close enough to me on speed to be a respected rival. He could even win motos on hard tracks but I have been closer to him too in sand. In Sweden I even won both motos and that was a real sand race – I was really proud of that. Racing sand is in the head. When you

Yves '06 – the hair's still long and the desire's still strong



have a strong head mud, sand, hard track are the same. If that had sunk in when I was younger I would have been more successful."

Although of full world status, MX3 is often denigrated – much to the annoyance of the contestants and, in particular, the champion. "The big problem for MX3 is lack of publicity. The press just don't come. The championship itself is not so bad. We have good tracks and the mentality of the riders is so much nicer than at MX1. People are open, friendly at MX3. In MX1 too many of them close themselves off. MX3 has the same atmosphere as all of motocross 10 years ago. The track is the same as MX1 but the paddock is better, more life."

"We even get reasonable crowds to watch but, as I said, hardly anyone comes from the press. I can understand this because so many of our races are on the same weekend as MX1/MX2 and when they do have a race on a free weekend for the other classes it is somewhere in Eastern Europe."

"Beggi and Ristori are faster than people think. They believe in themselves at MX3 and can win races but when they come to MX1 they seem to have a mental block and their results are not good. If they could believe in themselves more they could both make top 10 in MX1 easy."

Date clashes have also prevented Yves' wild card appearances which have brought podiums as at St Jean D'Angely in 2004. "I would have liked to race more MX1, I have a passion to show that I can still race with the best and I would like a full-time return. I would even race MX2. I could still be competitive in any class."

"The work you have to put in to win is the same in any class. You get out of this sport what you put into it and for sure I have enough talent for MX1, even MX2. But now I have a new goal, to bring the MX3 title to Yamaha and stop KTM."

Revenge would be sweet!

Yves was racing Yamahas for the third time in '01



WHICH WAY?

Travis Preston's supercross-only deal means he could be racing much longer – or retiring next season...

Travis Preston is among the most likeable guys on the AMA circuit and this may have something to do with why he made it to where he is today. He wasn't a phenom coming through the amateur ranks and at one point in the late '90s he even quit racing for a year – during which time he worked at a real job just like everyone else.

However, who would choose a real job over racing motocross for a living? Not Travis. After returning to racing he eventually found his way onto the Factory Connection race team where he won a regional supercross title in 2002. This year he finds himself back on the team he left only a couple of years ago and this time on the CRF450R vacated by Mike LaRocco.

Travis Preston has hooked up with the Factory Connection Honda team for '07 on a supercross-only basis



Steve Cox is an American moto-journalist who follows the entire AMA SX/MX tour. Since moving on from US weekly Cycle News he's struck out on his own to do the freelance thing and recently launched a new bi-weekly MX magazine – Motocross Illustrated – covering both AMA and GP action. He knows the sport and its personalities like few others and as our US Editor provides insight straight from the Stateside scene...



DBR: You sure did sign this deal late this year...

TP: "I just figure I had a few weeks off but then I was sitting around the house and I started wondering 'so, what am I going to do?'"

DBR: It was weird to see the only person ever to beat James Stewart in a heads-up supercross race when he didn't fall without a ride.

TP: "Yeah, how come everyone forgets that? Just because I haven't beaten him in a single race since..."

DBR: What made you decide to move back to Factory Connection?

TP: "They have such a good programme and as far as I'm concerned they're the best team out there. Those guys at Honda didn't put pressure on me. I put pressure on myself. I just feel a lot more relaxed at the Factory Connection team where I know all I can do is give it 100 per cent and that's it and that's all they want."

DBR: We understand Factory Connection was entertaining the thought for a long time about having a second 450 rider...

TP: "I kept talking to them throughout the year and they're like 'we're going to do it' then 'we're not going to do it'. Then, finally, it came down to the last little bit and

they couldn't believe that I didn't have a ride and they were thinking that it might be a good opportunity so they stepped up and did the deal."

DBR: Not to ask you about your finances but we've heard some riders say they wouldn't ride for X amount of dollars because it wasn't worth the risk to them. Did you think about this too?

TP: "You know, I had that same attitude after Ernie's crash and stuff. I was just like 'I need to make sure I'm going to make some money'. But then it's like you start sitting at home and it's like 'what am I going to do?'. It's like Ernie said, you can get hurt doing just about anything, you know? Slip on the driveway and you could get paralyzed."

"I feel God gave me a gift to ride motorcycles and I feel that's what I need to do. So this year I'm not making nothing but I'm racing so we'll see. I mean, I'm not going to do this two years in a row. I'm going to do it this year and if I do good hopefully my pay will increase and if it doesn't then for sure I'm going to retire."

DBR: So, the possibility of retirement is definitely something that's crossed your mind?

TP: "Yeah, I'm not going to do this two years in a row. There's no way. This year is kind of a fun thing. I've got



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my old mechanic Sean with me again so it could be a farewell tour or it could be the start of a new beginning. I'm supercross-only and it feels like for me I could race another six or seven years supercross-only."

DBR: That's right, you're a supercross-only guy. Doesn't it seem like the Nationals are starting to flicker out with all of you guys having SX contracts?

TP: "What's funny is when I was sitting down with my sponsors like Shoei and Gaerne, I asked them 'so, are you guys going to pay me any more money to race outdoors?' and they're both like 'no'. So I'm like 'do I have to race outdoors?' and they said 'we don't care'. So it's like if the sponsors don't care and the teams don't care why would I do all that work and do all that racing and not get paid for it? Now I'm riding more and I'm doing the Canada races and next year I'll do Jeremy's race and the US Open and I get to do all these races that I never get to do because the Nationals burn me out."

DBR: There seems to be two schools of thought about that. The first is that racing only supercross will keep you rested and your supercross skill will increase because that's all you're doing. The other is that while Stewart and company are hauling butt outdoors, you won't be getting any faster...

TP: "That might work for a guy that's 20 or 21 but I'm 28 so I think at this point I need to work on making racing

more fun for me. Nationals are just too long and it seems like we never get any time off anymore. Right now I'm more focused than ever because it's just supercross. I know now that I'll ride every day and work out because I know come May my ass will be on the couch."

DBR: Also, it seems like in the last half of the supercross season riders are spending their weeks at home testing for outdoors where you'll still be doing supercross stuff.

TP: "And, come July and August, I'll start riding SX again so that by the time the McGrath race comes I'll be in way better shape than all those other guys. You can ride outdoors all day long and be in the best shape, then come ride a supercross track and your arms are going to pump and your cardio is going to go up..."

DBR: Being team-mates with Ernesto Fonseca, we know it bothered a lot of guys when he got hurt...

TP: "It's funny you say that because to me it looked like it didn't affect anybody. I wasn't going around talking about it. I don't talk to a lot of people. But the guys that know me, like my mechanic and even Ernie...the first time I saw him he said he could see it in my eyes. But that's a really big deal for me. I've been riding with him at the Honda track since '02 and I've known him since he came over here in '99. It's a big deal but he has the attitude of things happen for a reason so he says he thinks he's supposed to be in a wheelchair for some reason but he doesn't

know what yet. I think that's definitely a good way to look at it."

DBR: Ricky Carmichael has even said that part of his decision to race a partial schedule this year instead of a full one is because Ernesto's injury really bothered him.

TP: "I said the same thing after the outdoors but then you sit on the couch and it's like I get this fulfillment riding motorcycles. You feel like you're accomplishing something and it just feels like what I'm meant to do is ride. I don't want to ride for nothing but..."

DBR: Do you have any set goals for this season?

TP: "I just want to run with Kevin. I want to run up front. Last year I was kind of off the pace with Ivan and Kevin and those guys so this year I want to be up in the top three or top five always."

DBR: There's a lot of new competition out there too with Ramsey and Millsaps and Langston...

TP: "It's just going to make it more fun. More guys to race with! You know how you guys are always complaining that the 250cc class is boring and blah, blah, blah..."

DBR: You guys?

TP: "Yeah, you guys. Reporters and all you people. Now you guys can't say that anymore because now there are a lot more guys racing and it should be good racing."



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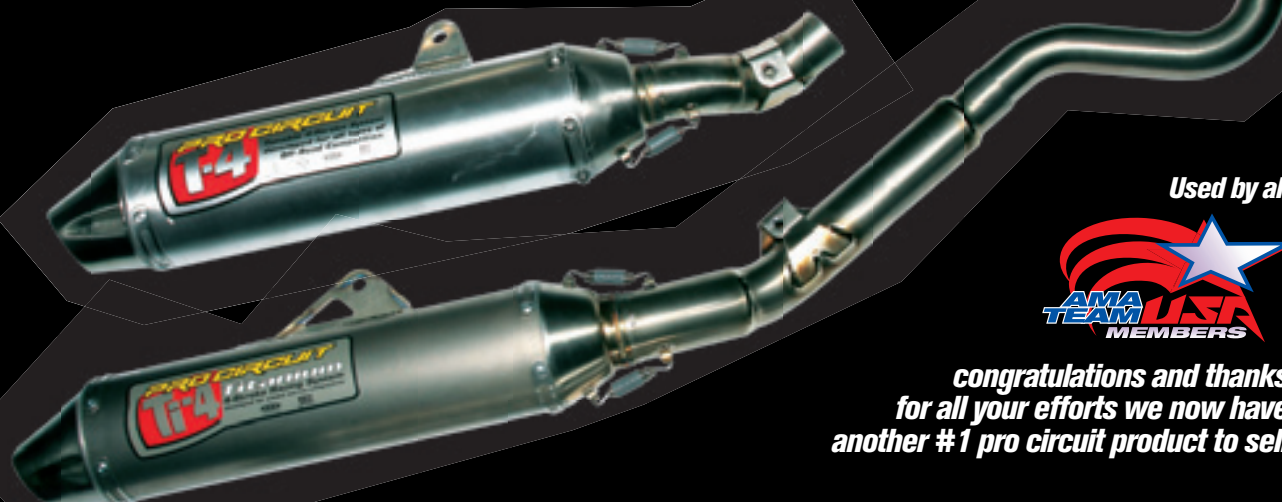
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DBR: The other things that helped keep the boredom out of it in the past were your podium interviews. I mean, you have to get on the podium to...

TP: "See, that's the problem. Getting on the podium. Now, if you want to come talk to me in the pits after the race, that's fine. I'll be there all the time."

DBR: Are you healthy right now?

TP: "Thank God, I'm healthy so far. Everything's going good. I like my bike and everything's working good. I got my house and we're all settled in there so I'm just riding and training now."

DBR: Since you're racing the Canadian rounds do you qualify for the privateer points?

TP: "Yes, I do, actually. I'm totally Factory Connection. I get no factory parts and I think that's considered a privateer. Now, I'm sure some people are going to be upset about it but you've got to go talk to Whitelock about it. But there are a lot of other good guys like Vuillemin and Nick Wey and guys like that. I'm sure the three of us will be going at it."

DBR: Since you've thought about it what are you going to do when you're done racing?

TP: "I had a month-and-a-half after the Nationals where I

actually thought I was done racing. I was setting things up to where I could be retired. I have a lot of friends that own construction companies and I could go work for them.

"I did that for a little bit and it's just not fun like racing. I just tested the waters. I own my water truck so I drove my water truck for a bunch of different companies and that was kind of cool to sit in the truck all day in the air conditioning with XM Radio going.

"I did that for two weeks but it's just boring. I like being out here at the track with all the people riding and trying to improve."

DBR: Isn't there a little pressure there when you're thinking about ending your career if this season doesn't go well?

TP: "I think it just feels right either way. First off, I told myself I wasn't going to race unless I got on a good team. I've been riding Hondas for a long time and riding for Honda – how could you go from Honda down to some satellite team?

"Then Factory Connection stepped up with a good team and I could ride the Honda track and everything's taken care of so I started rethinking things and I said I'll do it. Everything just kind of fell into place and I already had the mindset that if they pick me up next year and pay

me more money that's good but, if not, then maybe I'm not meant to race anymore."

DBR: But you can't just go to the Bahamas when you're done racing can you?

TP: "I could for maybe 10 years but then after that I don't know what I'd do. I'm the type of guy that will just sit and wait for something to fall into my lap. That's how my whole life has been. I don't try and stress about it. If something's going to happen it happens – like this Factory Connection deal. I sat back and waited and then it happened. I see an opportunity and I know right away if I'm going to like it."

DBR: You were actually out of racing altogether a few years ago, weren't you?

TP: "Yeah, in '97, I had a job and everything."

DBR: Does that help you to realize what life will be like after racing?

TP: "I don't understand why everyone is so stressed about it. I've actually worked a job and I know that there's stuff I can do after this. I know there's always some company I can go work at. But working a job doesn't feel right to me. It feels right for me to be riding. I like riding and training and doing all that."



Travis leads Mike LaRocco – for '07 he's picked up The Rock's ride

Giz a job! Gareth Edmunds takes over as DBR test pilot for the launch of the '07 Aprilia enduro range



SLEEK CHIC!

With regular enduro test pilot Geoff Walker otherwise engaged we enlisted the help of Tommy Searle's wrench Giz Edmunds - Jonty's even more beautiful baby brother - to take a pair of '07 Aprilia V-twins for a spin

Words by Gareth Edmunds Photos by Aprilia



THE APRILIA RXV is a bike I've always loved the look of because of its sleek Italian styling and also because it's so different – in a world of single-cylinder thumpers the Aprilia twin four-popper is different with a capital D.

The designers haven't been shy in breaking the conventional bike-building mould and producing a machine that looks like no other. But while thinking outside of the traditional bike-building box, the engineers responsible for the bike have also designed a machine that's designed to be as simple as it possibly can.

The bikes at the 2007 test were fitted with the race plastics kit which comes free with the bikes as part of the spares pack making what was already an eye-catching machine now even more stylish and a lot sportier – like a proper enduro machine, not a trail bike.

The bikes come fitted with high quality products as standard which shows they're designed for serious competition and not just to be mechanical eye candy. The machines are littered with quality parts – Marzocchi front forks, Nissin brakes matched with Braking disks, Domino throttle and clutch assemblies and Magura oversized bars.

With the bikes being both visually and mechanically appealing the idea of riding – and racing – a V-twin is very tempting and it'll be interesting to see how an Italian-built twin-cylinder enduro bike compares to other European and Japanese single-cylinder thumpers.

With the guidance of former world enduro champion and now Aprilia's WEC team manager, test and development rider Stefano Passeri, I arrived in a small village in the Italian hills where we were met by a team of technicians with the new '07 RXV range.

First up I decided to take the 450cc bike for a spin as the thought of getting straight onto a 550cc machine didn't appeal.

The electric starter fired the bike into life straight away. But then it stopped again. One of the technicians came over and told me to hold the throttle partially open. This worked as a choke, of sorts. The test bikes had different throttle housings to those fitted to the production bikes which will come with a small button on the housing which opens and locks the throttle to simulate what we were doing manually. This is then released when the throttle is opened further once the bike is warm.

The previous evening the head of development told us one of their main focuses for the new range was trying to reduce the hard-hitting characteristics of the '06 model. They had worked hard on improving the ease-of-use of the engine by concentrating on the bottom-end of the power range as this was too aggressive on the previous year's model.

As we rode up a slippery rock trail I could see straight away that they have achieved this. The power delivery was very smooth and useable and the engine kept on pulling and pulling but not in a brutal way. Obviously, if you really revved the engine it would hit harder and spin the rear wheel but this is only to be expected with any large four-stroke. The bike seemed to track really well when ridden smoothly on the rocky terrain.

As we rounded a corner at the top of a climb we saw a fast flowing, smooth trail. I was interested to see what the bike was like when it was opened up and it didn't take me long to see that this bike had very strong mid to top-end power. It wasn't arm-wrenching but very progressive and strong. The engine continued to pull and pull and didn't seem like it was ever going to die off.

Although the power was good the front end of the bike didn't feel as positive as I'd have liked. The bike did feel like the weight was very centralised and I found it hard to transfer that weight forward onto the front wheel to get the bike to grip but I think this was more due to the front wheel being fitted with an intermediate tyre rather than the mud tyre needed for the conditions we were riding in.

As I came to a slower twisty section in the middle of the fast trail I felt how good the Nissin brakes were. It's nice to find a European bike with strong brakes with a good feel – something I think has been lacking and over-looked by many other enduro bike makers. The Nissin calipers with the Braking wavy discs worked faultlessly all day.

Once we got to the end of the trail we dived down into a technical ravine which gave a good impression of how the bike would work in typical UK enduro terrain. The bike was easy to ride down the gully with the brakes giving confidence to push a little harder. The suspension felt good and seemed to now transfer the weight better as we were going downhill and it coped well in soaking up everything in its compression stroke as well as being equally as good on the rebound as it didn't seem to return too quickly and fire me off rocks. It seemed to follow the path I wanted to take everywhere.

I also found that the bike had very good engine clearance over the big rocks as I very rarely felt the sump hitting anything.

As I came to a very slow, technical part the engine stalled. This happened a few more times on the way down to the bottom of the gully and it was something I asked the technicians about as I wasn't sure how the idle worked due to the bike being fuel-injected. They pointed out it was easily solved with a small black



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knob tucked away which when turned controlled the idle speed of the engine like it would on a normal carburettor. After adjusting this I went back out for another lap of the track where I found the increased idle helped in the slower technical sections.

One of the most impressive things I found with this bike was that although it had a lot of power it was still a very quiet bike compared to most other enduro bikes even though it came fitted with Aprilia's new Akrapovic race system (available to buy as an optional extra). It's nice to see that a lack of noise doesn't have to mean power's greatly affected.

Next was the moment I'd not been looking forward to too much – riding the 550. As I pulled away I was thinking this is going to be way too much of a bike for 90 per cent of off-road riders. Why do you need such a big engine when the 450 obviously has plenty of go in it?

Well it was a bit of a shocker but the engine was even softer than the 450 but still pulled and pulled with ease. The power just seemed to be more linear which made it easier to use. As you'd expect they both seemed similar to ride as they're both based on the same chassis – even the weight felt similar as the crank inertia didn't make much difference on the flowing terrain.

The 550 almost seemed easier to ride if anything as I felt more comfortable stood up on the pegs at high speed. I think this was because the handlebars were rolled slightly further forward so accommodated a standing position better.

It was only later in the day when riding the bike around a tight, wet, grassy test track that I realised the 550 was a bigger bike to throw around. It pushed a lot more in the slippery corners on the front end and felt heavier than its smaller brother while cornering.

Generally the bikes are a very good package and only small niggly things annoyed me such as the kill switch which was easily hit. Once pushed it acted like a master cut-out switch which meant that you had to push the button again before the electric start would work. I reckon a normal kill switch would be much better but I think Aprilia may have done this with rallye raid homologation rules in mind.

The second problem I found with these bikes was when I attempted to ride back up the technical gully we had come down. I found the bikes easily overheated when I had to get off and push over certain obstacles. As I was waiting for the bikes to cool down I checked out the radiators. Although they're very large there was no fan – something I think is important on large four-strokes in technical sections as no matter how big the radiators are if there's no flow of air they don't cool the coolant. The technicians told me there was a fan included in the extras kit – it just hadn't been fitted.

While I was pushing the 550 up the ravine I had another thought. Unless your name is David Knight or Chris Tett, for hard technical events I reckon big thumpers – whatever the marque – are best left alone. I personally feel the 550 is well suited to fast flowing hare scramble type events, rallyes and for trail riding where it can be used to its full potential. That is unless you enjoy pushing big thumpers up the sides of mountains. Personally, that's not for me...

Specs

Aprilia RXV 4.5

Capacity: 449cc

Bore and stroke: 76mm x 49.5mm

Transmission: Five-speed

Fuel system: Electronic fuel injection with 38mm throttle body

Front suspension: Marzocchi 45mm USD fork

Rear suspension: Sachs shock

Front brake: 270mm disc

Rear brake: 240mm disc

Wheelbase: 1495mm

Seat height: 996mm

Specs

Aprilia RXV 5.5

Capacity: 549cc

Bore and stroke: 80mm x 55mm

Transmission: Five-speed

Fuel system: Electronic fuel injection with 40mm throttle body

Front suspension: Marzocchi 45mm USD fork

Rear suspension: Sachs shock

Front brake: 270mm disc

Rear brake: 240mm disc

Wheelbase: 1495mm

Seat height: 996mm





Above: Christophe Pourcel lifts the King of Bercy crown in Paris



Tony Cairoli stays upright, Cyrille Coulon doesn't



"I ENJOY supercross but I have to admit this track is scary," admits Tony Cairoli even before the first race. And the '05 world champ is no pussy!

"The dirt isn't quite as compact as California but nowhere in America are the whoops as high as here," explains BT's mechanic Craig Behl who's over for the weekend with a full-on Pro Circuit Kwacker for Christophe Pourcel.

"A valve dropped in the engine in the Friday Main," sighs Bercy legend David Vuillemin.

"I had it won but I didn't finish," declares Vegas winner Josh Grant while Christophe Pourcel just grins and utters a few precious words of French when France's answer to Debbie Harry shoves a mic up his nose. What does he care? The 18-year-old world champion is now also the King of Bercy!

The Parisian crowd are obviously glad to have a French winner again but there is little of the frenetic joy which greeted the victories of Bayle and Vuillemin and no-one is hanging over

MERDE CHAUD!

Pourcel wins as DV drops a valve and the top Yanks taste prime Parisienne loam but the big news for the Brits is Max Anstie's Prince of Bercy crown

Words and photos by Alex Hodgkinson

the rail to greet Pourcel every lap as he comes back into the main arena. The introvert kid simply does not inspire fan worship!

"Do you think they still like us?" grins Mervyn Anstie on Saturday evening after Max has just caned the French minibike elite for the second straight night. Well, yes, actually they do Merv. The 80s debuting in the POPB and lapping within seven seconds of SX2 pacesetter Vuillemin go down a bomb with the Bercy faithful. And it's not 'ah, aren't they sweet' like with the 60 demos of previous years. This is cut-throat dicing from the next generation pros.

French supremo Jason Clermont is miffed when he is excluded from the Saturday re-run for passing on yellow and Jeremy Chauveau has leapt past Max for the lead under yellow on night one but the first ever English Main Event winner in Bercy gets away with planting Yohann Lafont on the ground with a block-pass for his Saturday win. He even gets cheered (eat your heart out, Mikey!) for offering a hand of apology

– "Sorry, I didn't mean to actually knock you off" – to Lafont on the podium.

The sport needs characters whether in Britain or France and it doesn't matter that half the crowd can't understand a word he's saying. Fabled announcer Francis Magnanou is in stitches every evening because he can hardly get a word in edgeways once Max grabs the mic and lets the words stream out. The whole place loves Max and DV is bubbling with enthusiasm too. "Who says the British can't ride supercross? I saw this kid already in Sheffield. He's for real!"

"I've never ridden anywhere like this before," tells the 13-year-old. And how could he, because there is nowhere else like Bercy! "I just hope all my mates were watching that on telly." Max doesn't think the track's dangerous either. "They should come to my practice track. Now that is rough!"

They do actually tone down the whoops for Saturday – not in height but in the angle of the

faces – and Josh Grant finally manages to get through them in one piece. On Friday he has already planted his face in the ground in practice and he finishes his heat ahead of Pourcel with his eyes crossed after grinding his googleys on the last lap.

Steve Bruhn didn't witness Damon Bradshaw splatter French dirt in 1990 but he too knows. "Josh is never going to get through there like that for three days in one piece."

It's the third lap of the Friday Main. The Factory Connection boy has a lead of 50 yards as he plants the front wheel in the face of the third whoop. When he lands chest-down four whoops further along the boy's lucky that his cartwheeling bike doesn't land on his back – but he's still stretched off.

Back for more on Saturday, Josh has already thrown away the lead once, blocks his way back past Pourcel and half-a-lap later throws it away in the rhythm section. Somehow his vacant CR does not collect

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Results

King of Bercy

1	Christophe Pourcel	(France – Pro Circuit Kawasaki)	1+2+5
2	Pierre-Alexander Renet	(France – NGS Honda)	3+4+3
3	David Vuillemin	(France – MDK Honda)	DNF+1+1
4	Eric Sorby	(France – Pro-Circuit Kawasaki)	4+10+4
5	Justin Brayton	(USA – Motoworld Yamaha)	2+5+12
6	Benjamin Coisy	(France – Cadre Rouge Honda)	DNQ+6+6
7	Josh Grant	(USA – Factory Connection Honda)	DNF+DNF+2
8	Sebastien Pourcel	(France – GPKR Kawasaki)	DNQ+9+8
9	Marvin Musquin	(France – Kawasaki)	7+DNQ+9
10	Jason Lawrence	(USA – Motoworld Yamaha)	DNF+3+DNF

Prince of Bercy

1	Max Anstie	(GB – Rabbit Racing Kawasaki)	1+1+3
2	Melvin Regner	(France – Yamaha)	3+5+2
3	Yohann Lafont	(France – KTM)	4+3+5
4	Jeremy Chauveau	(France – KTM)	2+2+9
6	Jason Clermont	(France – Honda)	5+DNQ+1

Max Anstie is the new
Prince of Bercy





Josh Grant finds out the hard way just how tough the track is



A 1-1-3 card ensures Anstie is the new darling of the French supercross fans

any of the oncoming traffic in the whoops.

With Mike Alessi riding like a donk – he's got papa Tony in one ear and Gary Bailey in the other and has forgotten how to ride – and Vuillemin stomping back to the pits after his Honda drops a valve, Pourcel only has to keep Justin Brayton – a product of US Arenacross – off his rear wheel to win on Friday. And the world champ, already a professional squirrel when it comes to storing up his nuts – sorry, points – for a rainy day, doesn't even try to fight when first Grant and then Vuillemin block-pass in the Saturday Main.

They are both out of it for the title and Christophe is a straightaway ahead of Pierre-Alexandre Renet – the lanky 22-year-old who moves to MX1 next year because he is too big for a 250 – on both nights.

The holeshot on Sunday should ensure the crown but then the plan gets turned on its head as CP washes out in turn one. Just as well perhaps that he brought down four others with him because with Renet a secure third he needs sixth to win overall and can make precious little headway from 10th on lap one.

Big brother Sebastien doesn't make life

difficult and he eventually passes Soubeyras and Coisy but that would not have been enough if Cairoli, Mike Brown and Alessi hadn't binned it. Lucky? Possibly. You had to feel sorry for Renet whose only error all weekend was to demolish the bike at the end of the tunnel in the Saturday French SX Tour race but a victory for the unsung hero would probably have done little for mythos Bercy.

The place is simply unique and Britain is guaranteed a hero for as long as Max's career lasts. It is the thing which dreams are made of. Roll on November 2007!



FIGHTING IRISH!

**Crockard comes out swinging in
Belfast's Odyssey Arena**

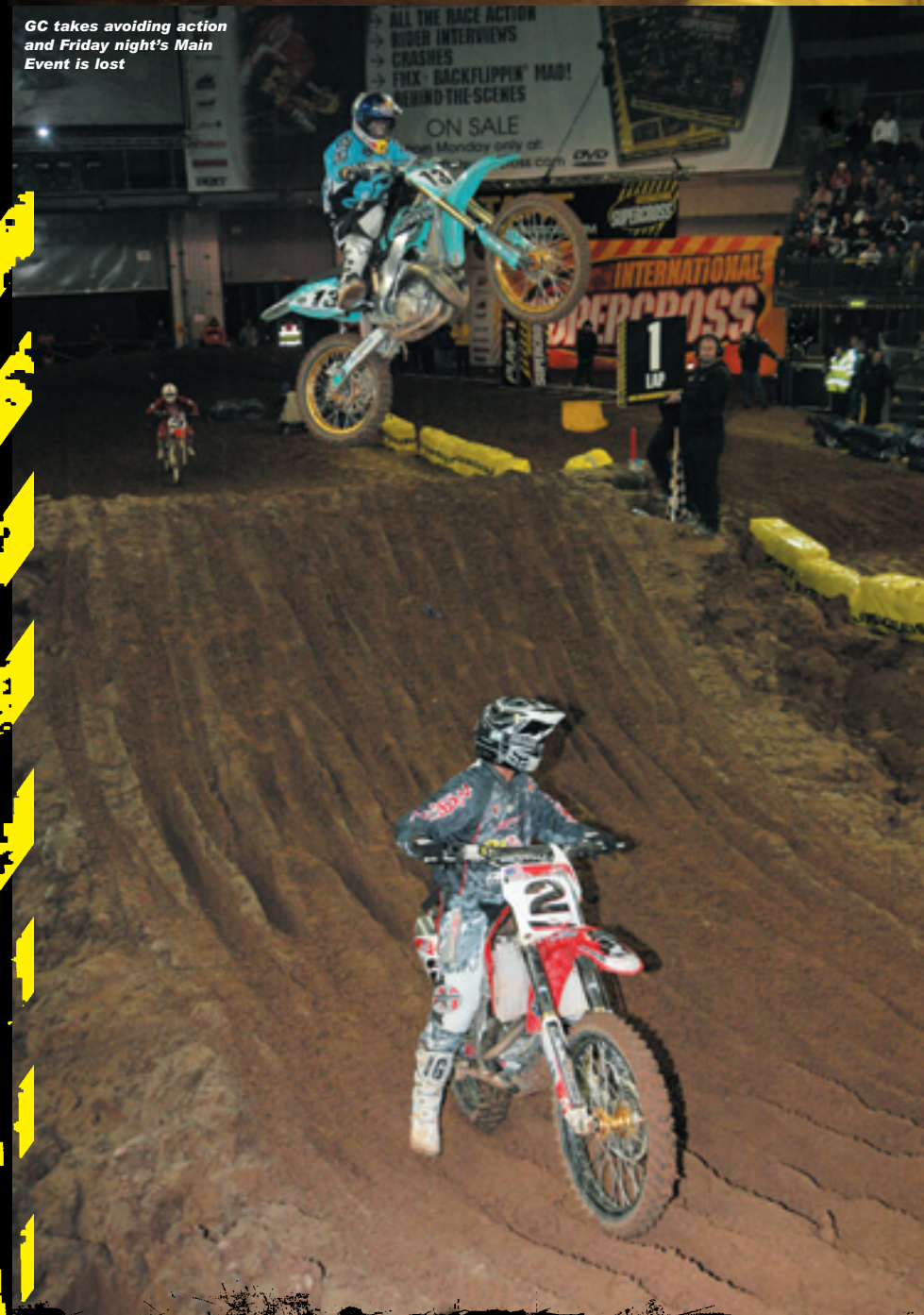
Words and photos by Suttý



Gordy and Mike Brown go head-to-head on the final lap of Saturday night's Main



A big crash leaves Jacob Saylor looking seriously detuned



GC takes avoiding action and Friday night's Main Event is lost



IT'S THE event that some riders reckon is 'the best supercross in Europe' and the only indoor race you can guarantee will sell out in the UK – laydees and gennlemen, it's the Belfast International Supercross at the Odyssey Arena.

Mike Brown knows all about Belfast because the ex AMA 125cc National champion is a two-time runner-up at the event – in 2004 when he was badly beaten by Jean-Sebastien Roy and last year when he was trounced by Tortelli. While neither JSR or Sebastien are back in '06, Brown's got a new sparring partner in the form of local lad Gordon Crockard.

Although Crockard flat-out sucked at last year's race and was barely able to get out of his own way let alone come close to taking a Main Event podium, for '06 he's a rejuvenated man. After breaking free from the Wulfsport Honda team, Crockard shows up at the Odyssey with a one-off ride – a turquoise 250 two-stroke Eastwood Bookmakers Honda – and plenty to prove.

Other men debuting new colours in Belfast are Red Bull KTM's Tommy Searle and the all-new Suzuki Swift team have Elliot Banks-Browne fighting their corner. Meanwhile both Billy MacKenzie on the Bike-it Dixon Yamaha

and Motovision Suzuki's Neville Bradshaw make their final appearances for their current teams in the Odyssey.

Unlike a normal supercross event which sees heats, semis and LCQs whittle down the numbers for the final, the Belfast International sees each class of 12 riders run three straight motos with the top seven overall scorers from each class being forwarded to the King of the Odyssey Main Event.

Friday's qualifying motos are kicked off by the Lites class. Old-man Brown wins the first two while the kids of the class battle it out for second. Searle, Shaun Simpson, Ryan Marmont and Brad Anderson enjoy a pair of flat-out, bar-banging, block-passing battles until Anderson finds some extra pace third time out and beats the lot – Brown included – after pulling the holeshot and hanging it out for 12 sweet laps.

Crockard clean sweeps the Supercross class ahead of ex Bike-it team-mate MacKenzie who finishes second each time. Behind those two, things are a little more inconsistent as Wildmoor Yamaha's Spanish superstar Xavi (cha-vee) Hernandez, LPE Kawasaki's Ryan Voase and local boys Martin Barr and Wayne Garrett battle

it out with four freshly imported North Americans – Jeff Dement, Erick Vallejo, Jacob Saylor and Canadian Kyle Keast.

Dement's riding is much less immaculate than his hair and the quaintly-quiffed Texan superstar has what ex-team boss – and swearsy bloke of great renown – Roy Emberson might describe as a ****ing 'orrible time in the Odyssey. Bogus technical problems and an abundance of unforced errors keep the Lone Star statesman and '02 Odyssey winner from making it to the front of the pack this time around.

In fact, aside from Brown the transatlantic challengers generally have a bit of a nightmare. Keast never really gets on the gas while fast-starting Saylor has a massive crash in the opening moto. Saylor's got an excuse for being seriously de-tuned but his Tamer Motorsports team-mate Vallejo just never gets to grips with the soft, rutted circuit although he does play a major part in the outcome of Friday's mixed capacity King of the Odyssey Main Event.

Crockard's been lightning-quick out of the gate all night and it's the same story in Friday's Main Event as the deadly mixture of Honda 250 two-stroke power and a highly motivated

**Brad Anderson leads
Shaun Simpson and
Ryan Marmont**



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Nev Bradshaw grabs a fifth on Saturday



Ashley Greedy takes a wrong turn



Tommy Searle grabs a Friday night second on his factory KTM debut

Irishman – who's watching the unprotected starter rather than the gate – mean it's Gordy and the turquoise Eastwood Bookmakers' Honda that round turn one in the lead with Brown second and Searle, MacKenzie and Dement right there with him.

Gordy wastes no time and opens a small gap by setting the fastest lap of the night on lap two while Brown finds himself sandwiched midway between Crockard and a salacious Searle/MacKenzie scrap which Billy gets the better of just before the mid-way point.

With the laps winding down and the course rutting up, Gordy looks to have it in the bag until that man Vallejo gets himself in a mess on the take off to the finish line double and comes up way short. As Erick rolls back into the gap a couple of riders jump right over his head – but not Crockard.

"I came out of the last corner and saw the yellow flag then the finisher put the two laps to go board in front of that – it's like they were battling for position," claims Crockard. "Anyway, I came up to the face of the jump and I had something like 47 ruts to choose from then I saw Vallejo's head appear from between the

two jumps. I thought I was going to hit him so I did the natural thing – I shut the throttle off and tried to turn. I landed on the face of the next jump and went down like a sack of spuds."

With Gordy grounded, Brown's able to cruise to an easy win ahead of Searle and MacKenzie who've seemingly switched places again while everyone's attention is firmly focussed on Crockard's calamity.

While Crockard stewes over Friday's end result, track builder Justin Barclay works through the night to make a few minor changes to the Odyssey circuit for Saturday's race. And the re-worked track makes for better racing, not that you'd know from looking at the results as both Brown and Crockard make a clean sweep of their respective class motos.

As the gate drops for the main Brown gets the jump out of the gate but MacKenzie and Crockard are right with him. Down in the pack Dement hits Voase hard enough to send him skittering through two lots of bales while Simpson's passing people left, right and centre as he battles through the pack like a man possessed.

Billy Mac slips to fourth on lap two allowing

Crockard and Marmont to get behind Brown who's doing all he can to ease away. But Crockard's not having any of it and the crowd go crazy as their local hero starts gaining on the American, especially in the whoops which Gordy's got dialed.

Crockard pulls back Brown lap after lap until he finally makes a move after the whoops at the midway point of the race. But Brown comes barreling back down the inside two turns later to stick a pass on Crockard and then switches his line through the whoops in an effort to block Gordy who's visibly faster.

As the laps wind down Crockard's all over Brown but time runs out for the Ulsterman who finishes less than a second behind Brown and a couple ahead of third placed Marmont who himself has a slight gap on Simpson in fourth.

Despite missing out Gordy's all smiles. "I'm not too disappointed," claims Crockard. "I came to put on a good race for the fans and that's what I did – it was certainly some race, wasn't it?" And Brown agrees. "This type of close finish is what the fans come to see. Crockard was right behind me for most of the race and I couldn't relax for a single moment."



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Celebrity Deathmatch

Belfast's miniature heroes!

There's a top notch entry of celebrity minibikers on hand in the Odyssey for the cunningly named Celebrity Minibike race. Some of the stars competing include pop performer Shane Lynch, TV actors Kelvin Fletcher and Ryan Thomas, Channel 4's extreme sports super-host Ed Leigh and a whole load of local two-wheeled superstars such as Michael Lavery, Andrew O'Brien and Jeremy McWilliams.

But it's actually two ex GP motocrossers who trade race wins as Jamie Dobb and Jeff Perrett* win one apiece. It's no surprise really that Dobber and El Presidente dominate when you consider they are in fact riding cheater bikes – that's right, the ex 125cc world champ and the ex, erm, TMUK teamster are riding Minibikepro.com tuned KLX110s with oversize wheels. Tut tut tut!

Of course, they'd still probably have beaten DBR's entry on both nights if they were using skateboard wheels in their bikes. Why? Well, because Suttly quite frankly sucks at riding minibikes.

*Little known fact: Jeffrey Perrett was so ugly when he was born the midwife initially thought he'd come out arse first!



Main: Suttly – sucks on a minibike!
Left: It's a poor state of affairs when 59-year-old Jack Burnicle has the best head of hair



Top Aussie Ryan Marmont goes 7-3



Belfast is Billy Mac's Yamaha swansong

Results - King of the Odyssey

Friday

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 Mike Brown | (CAS Honda – USA) |
| 2 Tommy Searle | (Red Bull KTM – GB) |
| 3 Billy MacKenzie | (Bike-it Dixon Yamaha – GB) |
| 4 Jeff Dement | (Yamaha – USA) |
| 5 Shaun Simpson | (Wulfsport Honda – GB) |
| 6 Brad Anderson | (Pioneer Yamaha – GB) |
| 7 Ryan Marmont | (KTM – AUS) |
| 8 Xavier Hernandez | (Wildmoor Yamaha – E) |
| 9 Ryan Voase | (LPE Kawasaki – GB) |
| 10 Gordon Crockard | (Eastwood Bookmakers Honda – GB) |

Saturday

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 Mike Brown | (CAS Honda – USA) |
| 2 Gordon Crockard | (Eastwood Bookmakers Honda – GB) |
| 3 Ryan Marmont | (KTM – AUS) |
| 4 Shaun Simpson | (Wulfsport Honda – GB) |
| 5 Neville Bradshaw | (Motovision Suzuki – GB) |
| 6 Jeff Dement | (Yamaha – USA) |
| 7 Brad Anderson | (Pioneer Yamaha – GB) |
| 8 Ashley Greedy | (PAR Honda – GB) |
| 9 Xavier Hernandez | (Wildmoor Yamaha – E) |
| 10 Erick Vallejo | (Honda – USA) |

Extra online

Belfast Gallery

For more lovely pics from the Belfast International SX hook up to www.dirtbikerider.com and check out our Odyssey Arena gallery...



SHINING STARS?

Thanks to their title sponsorship of a GP team, Chinese bike manufacturer Shineray are making their name known in Europe – and with a growing MX scene back in China it could just be the thin end of the red wedge

Words and photos by Alex Hodgkinson

THEIR TRIO at the Nations didn't exactly pull up any trees but there are 1.3 billion people in the People's Republic of China and global expansion is the name of the game.

"We already have GPs in Formula One and road racing and we want to host a motocross GP by 2010," explained Chinese Motor Sports Association (CMSA) deputy secretary general Zhong Tianqi when he attended the Matterley Basin Nations in September.

And despite the gulf in speed between the Chinese riders and even those from Eastern European countries, he was also adamant "and we hope that in a few years some of our riders will be good enough to compete in the GPs".

A flight of fantasy? Maybe yes but maybe no! It's just under 50 years since the complacent moguls of the European motorcycle industry gave a mild chuckle as Sochiro Honda sent four Japanese riders, a gaggle of mechanics and machines to the 1959 TT. Slow they might have been but the quartet circulated like clockwork – two years later they were sweeping all before them for speed as well and by the end of the '60s the once mighty British motorcycle industry had collapsed in the face of the oriental invasion.

Remember too how the Chinese have overwhelmed swimming and distance running and you get some insight into the drive for success that China possesses. It is a fact not lost on their neighbours across the Sea of Japan.

Key in the name of one of the Big Four and 'China' into your Google search engine and you will quickly discover that the Japanese have not been slow to establish a base in the booming Chinese economy. Cars, generators, pumping equipment – the range of articles being produced by the Japanese in China is growing annually – but only Kawasaki, for export, have a major motorcycle plant on the Asian mainland.

So don't the Chinese need bikes? Well, yes, they do but the social layer which favours two-wheeled transport still lacks financial buying potential and the native opposition is huge.

Literally hundreds of manufacturers have sprung up in the last decade and while their products might raise a smirk from western onlookers with their fragile-looking frames, horizontally-laid motors and street-legal mirrors on supposed dirt bikes, they clearly fill a vacuum in the market for cheap transport for the masses. And, don't forget, there are 1.3 billion potential customers on the home market alone!

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Shineray's Marvin Van Daele leads Ken De Dycker



Le Shi in action at the Motocross des Nations



MXdN - Team China

#101 - Wen Min Su

Clearly the fastest of the trio, the 28-year-old from the south east of the country, close to Tibet, is an eight-time national champion and current holder of the number one plate in the MX1 class.

#102 - Le Shi

Team China's MX2 rider and at the tender age of 19 already a two-time national champ, he's currently ranked number six at home. Le also comes from the south east.

#103 - Yao Yao

The youngest of the trio, he appeared a little out of his depth on a 450. Back home he is ranked fourth and has three titles to his name. Yao comes from central China, close to Shanghai.

Team China with Andre Massant



Probably the best known Chinese marque here in Europe – not because of vast sales as yet – is Shineray for no other reason than the fact they are the title sponsors of the Belgian MX1 team of ex-GP front runner Andre Massant and his rider Marvin Van Daele.

Look closely and you will see that all reference to the bike's Honda roots have been obliterated and the involvement can be seen currently as a marketing tool for the home market.

Although only established at the end of 1997, Shineray is run by one of the most aggressive marketing moguls in the branch, Mister Gong Daxin – a young, first-generation entrepreneur.

"A guy I know got his hands on a Chinese magazine and he said he would try to make contact," explains Andre, a 125GP rival of Roger Harvey back in the '70s. "One year later he told me he had been in China and there was a guy there who was interested to sponsor a team to expand brand awareness. Then another year went by and suddenly I had a telephone call – Mister Gong was in Belgium, said he liked motocross and wanted to meet me. I still thought he was joking but we met and six months later he called and offered me a three-year contract."

That was at the end of 2004 and the team's GP debut came at Zolder the following spring. "Marvin has been with me since he was on the 80s and has been gradually climbing the ranks.

The third place at Namur was a real boost but later that year he broke his foot. This year we couldn't start training until two weeks before the first GP and then, just as he was getting back properly, he broke the other foot in Sweden so we effectively did one season in two years so far. I hope that we can make a complete season in 2007!

"Okay, we are not winning but I explained back in 2004 that I could not immediately offer him a winning team but that perhaps we could build from small beginnings. Mister Gong says they are very happy when there is publicity outside China and they make a lot of promotion in China itself. We flew out to China in 2005 and raced a round of the Chinese championship near Beijing. Marvin rode a 250F in the MX1 class but the track was very tight and he won by a long way."

So what does the Chinese scene look like? "They race MX1 and MX2 on Japanese bikes and they also have a class for Chinese bikes up to 150cc."

Mister Zhong Tianqi of the CMSA was able to illuminate further. "We have between three and four thousand active racers in the entire country. The sport is growing and I expect to have a GP close to Beijing by 2010. Shineray is not our largest manufacturer but they are sponsoring the team here."

Indeed, a trawl through the internet reveals literally hundreds of bike and quad manufacturers with such exotic names as

Apollo, Visita, Sunjazz and Longstar, not to mention more Chinese sounding brands as Changshun, Xingyu and Boshen.

The Chinese bikes are universally four-strokes with the most popular displacements 110, 125, 150 and 200cc. Water-cooling and E-starters are almost universal and claimed Common Market approval of models is stressed all over their websites. At present it's fair to say they're more appropriate as pitbikes but advances are rapid.

Another thing which stands out is the range of quads and Shineray claim markets in America, Europe, Africa, Australasia, Mexico, south east Asia and Pakistan.

Much of the industry appears to be situated in the south of the country around the techno pole city of Yongkang but Shineray and others are based in the central region around Chongqing with an annual production exceeding 300,000, an oil-sealed production line in an 80,000 square metre high-tech factory and 1500 employees including a 70-strong R&D department. Internet hits suggest they have a particularly flourishing market among New Zealand farmers searching for cheap transport.

As many of you will have seen at the Nations, the Chinese are still way off European speed as they make their first tentative steps into our sport but the experience of the Japanese half-a-century ago has taught us not to underestimate the desire to succeed in the Far East.

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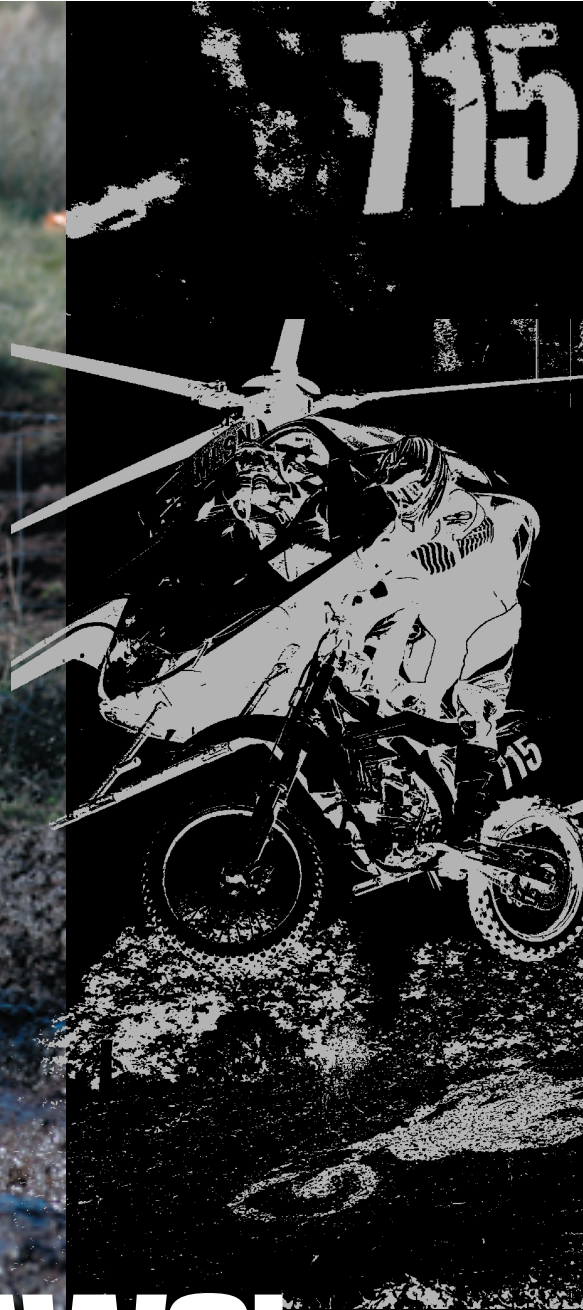


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Dawg gets both wheels off the ground (technical term 'jumps') high on the Cumbrian fells



DAWG IN A BAWG!

Sutty heads north to Cumbria (eh!) where he takes his cherished CRF450 for a final fling and plants it in one radiator-deep bog after another

Words by Sutty Photos by dsimages.co.uk

IT'S NOT been the best couple of months for the magazine machine as crappy autumn weather and other projects have meant that I've only been able to take the pride of the fleet – the CRF450 – out of my workshop/kitchen once since the Maxxis round at Hawkstone.

And after experiencing the dizzy heights of MX1 championship motocross this month's ride was a whole lot less glamorous. The windswept fells of Kendal hosted a Westmorland and DMC organised hare scramble where a large entry of off-roaders – including my bad self – enjoyed a 150-minute battle through big, bad bogs and over big, bad boulders.

At the end of it all I felt I'd learnt a lot more about my bike – like how to pull it out of a radiator-deep mudhole, how to pick it up after falling over in a radiator-deep mudhole and how to ride for two hours with a front flat tyre on a radiator-deep mudhole filled course.

At the end of it all I was left with the world's muddiest bike but five #3 jet wash tokens and a gallon or so of Muc-Off put that right although

I'm now banned from my favourite local bike cleansing facility for leaving behind a King Kong-sized pile of poop. Oopsie!

With the bike cleaned off I figured now was as good a time as any to show the Honda a little tenderness in the workshop. The Big Bang hourmeter currently shows I've put whole 24-and-a-half hours in on the bike and if you've been a regular reader of the magazine machine pages you'll know that the bike has had surprisingly little maintenance needed after Geoff Walker and I fully prepped the puppy before it was ever ridden.

Aside from regular air filter and oil and filter changes and a not-so-regular valve clearance check the CRF needs very little to keep it running smooth. One item of maintenance that many people overlook after cleaning their bikes is draining the carb. This is an absolutely essential part of maintaining your bike and something I do after washing and before each and every ride.

Before Hawkstone I fitted a Petersen Racing

Deep Sump which is a replacement drain plug for all Keihin FCR carbs. It not only holds more fuel than the standard plug but also has a filter element to hold onto any rogue particles of dirt that find their way into your bike's fuel system.

I can honestly say I've not noticed a difference in either the way my bike runs or the amount of dirt and water found sitting in the plug. However, I do reckon that people who aren't so uptight about draining their carb so regularly would find a build up of crud in their Deep Sump's foam filter that might normally have been sucked through into the engine.

Unfortunately, I'm not going to be able to test that theory as my time with the CRF has come to an end. After re-pimping my ride so it could appear as a centrepiece of the DBR stand at the Dirt Bike Show and also because the weather's gone to pot I've decided now is the time to put the puppy up for sale.

So if you fancy getting your hands on the pimpingest privateer bike of the year you know who to call...

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Cheers dudes!

Cast of thousands...

Without getting too emotional about it all, I really do have to say that this year's magazine machine is the most enjoyable bike I've ever ridden. Obviously, the stock 2006 model CRF450 is a sweet bike and I have to thank Scott Grimsdall and Roger Harvey at Honda for supplying the weapon – so cheers guys!

But to turn the bike into a super-sweet missile we had a little help from the following people and companies who definitely deserve a mention and muchos thanks por favor. So in no particular order I'd like to thank David Banks at Bickers, Matt 'Borat' Hodges at Madison, Leon and Dave King at Apico, Chris and Mark at K-Tech, Big Al, TB and Bass-Mont at MotoXtreme, Barry at Michelin, Dale and Matt at Sunline ARC, Godfrey at SR-75, Vic Noble formerly of Motul, Tom Yorke at Blink MX, Rees at Renthall, Chris at MX Graphics, Neil Challice at Big Bang, Mark at Fro Systems, Graham and the team at M-Bo Race Parts, Matt Ramsey and the Petersen Racing peeps, Big Bad Dave Gooch at GMX, Scott and Tim at Rush Racing and Bazza at mxbits.com.

Having a trick bike with nowhere to ride it is kinda pointless so cheers to the British Masters MX team, Stevie Ireland and the WOR team, Brian and Di Higgin as well as the Salop Motor Club and also MJ and Godfrey at Marshfield.

And finally I'd like to give a big-up to Ray Archer, Myles Adburgham and Ray Chuff for taking awesome pics of the machine in action and also Robin, Jonathan and Andy for making the helicopter shoot at Marshfield possible. Cheers everyone!



Spy Alloy goggles

I've always been a bit of a Smith man when it comes to motocross goggles as for fit and function, they're frickin' fantastic! But when No Fear stepped in as a major team sponsor for last summer's Romaniacs, part of the deal was that Geoff and I would wear Spy goggles.

Spy are a relatively new goggle manufacturer compared to Smith, Oakley or Scott but their design team have still come up with something special when it comes to their Alloys. For starters they look trick and at first glance have all the bells and whistles you'd find on most top-of-the-range motocross goggles – fancy vents, silicone stripped straps, dual layer foams etc.

As you may or may not know the Romaniacs involves long days spent in the saddle so it's a good job the Alloys are comfy or else I'd have been a very sulky Sutt Dawg. The Romaniacs also has the occasional section where you have no choice but to push and pull your bike over almost impossible to pass obstacles and the Spys stayed pretty much steam-free for the duration – another plus point in my book.

In fact, the only downside to using Spy goggles I can find is that their non-laminated tear-offs seem to be a little on the thick side meaning you can't mount too many before your vision is blurred. Luckily, Spy offer laminate tear-offs (£11 for two stacks of seven) which are probably more suited for the times when you need more than five clear views per moto. Standard tear-off quality aside I reckon the Spys are as good a goggle as you can get for most types of motocross and off-road use.





The Nitro Circus Lock 'n Load

★★★★★★★★

If you're on a budget and can only afford to buy one DVD in the near future then make sure it's this one! All your favourite motocross, snocross, supercross, freestyle and enduro stars – including the sidecar ridin' crows from Weston – make an appearance at one time or another in this fast-paced look at all that's mad in the world of motosports.

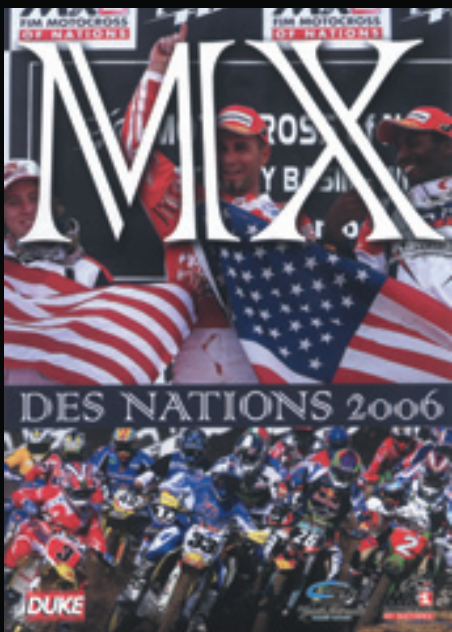
From the West Coast of America to Austria and most places in-between, Lock 'n Load delivers some truly outrageous but totally awesome footage of bone-breaking crashes, ridiculous racing, mad stunts and plenty of stupid people doing things their mommas warned them not to. No amount of words will ever do this DVD justice so go out and beg, buy or steal a copy of your own to treasure forever.

MX Des Nations 2006

★★★★★★★★

This DVD (supplied by MX1 – that's www.mx1.co.uk) features all the action from the 2006 Motocross des Nations and is well worth seeing just to watch Stefan Everts' give Bubba a double beatdown in his awesomely effortless feet-up style. As good as the race action is the commentary leaves a lot to be desired as Kenny Kay annoyingly bleats on and on and on and on throughout the full 52 minutes – stick a sock in it Kenny!

But ignoring Kenny for one moment – oh, if only – this DVD is actually a good reminder of a great weekend with the added bonus that when it's all over there's not a five-hour queue to get out of the TV room. Sweet!



The Doctor, the Tornado and the Kentucky Kid

★★★★★★★★

Okay so this DVD isn't strictly off-road but nonetheless it makes for great viewing. All Moto GP fans should already have a copy of Faster which follows the GP circus in a documentary style and The Doctor, the Tornado and the Kentucky Kid is kind of the follow-up film to that original epic.

I say kind of because instead of following the full season this movie is based on just one race – the 2005 Red Bull American GP at Laguna Seca. And what a race it proves to be as Yamaha teamsters Valentino Rossi and Colin Edwards do all they can to beat Honda's homeboy Nicky Hayden and the cream of the Moto GP crop around the exciting twists and turns of the Laguna Seca circuit.

With plenty of exciting riding and onboard camera action, interviews and some bonus bits and bats The Doctor, the Tornado and the Kentucky Kid is well worth seeking out this Christmas.

MX1 World Championship '06

★★★★★★★★

Over three hours of MX1 GP action narrated by Kenny Kay who's basically not very good at this commentating lark. Watch in disbelief as Kenny's unable to tell the difference between Tanel Leok and Bas Verhoeven or Jonathan Barragan and Luigi Seguy who doesn't even ride in the MX1 class. Crap commentary aside this DVD actually ain't that bad – although some of the footage seems to be a little bit pixilated – and shows all the action from each and every round of the 2006 series.



Crusty Demons Playstation 2 Game

★★★★★★★★

This game is the biggest load of motocross-related cack I have ever seen in my life! In fact there's not one positive thing I can say about it and my mummy always said 'if you can't say anything nice about something don't say anything at all' – so I won't.

Hmmm okay, maybe I will. For starters the physics are all wrong, the bikes look like crap and the whole point of the game is to try and spank your character senseless by crashing into randomly placed objects and pixellated scenery. Avoid this game at all costs!

The Next Generation

★★★★★★★★

You might have heard of GSP Racing before as the Birmingham-based engineering company knock out some pretty trick parts for moto weapons. During 2006 GSP's owner Gary Price decided to step back from the hardparts side of the business and create a full-on UK youth-scene DVD similar to the very popular American series – Mini Warriors!

Featuring action from the BYMX, BSMA and British Masters series as well as the Sheffield Supercross and a whole host of private tracks, The Next Generation takes a good look at a handful of our rising youth stars – Ashley Greedy, Steven Clarke, Sam Davis, Jack Rowe, Kristian Whatley, Jake Nicholls and some kiddie called Tommy Searle or something – doing what they do best.

I personally really enjoyed this film and when you consider it's a first attempt you can't knock it too much. I'm already eagerly awaiting TNG II – you'd best pull your finger out, huh Gary?





MXGB 2006



The televisual coverage of the Maxxis British motocross championships used to be woeful at best but for 2006 a new production company – Greenlight TV – came onboard and made Sky Sports' British motocross coverage way more watchable.

This DVD takes all the best bits from the 2006 MX1 and MX2 championship chase and melts them down along with an excellent onboard bonus feature into a wonderful 230 minutes of fantastic family viewing. If you love British motocross then you'll love this DVD. Oh, and see if you can spot my Hawkstone crash!

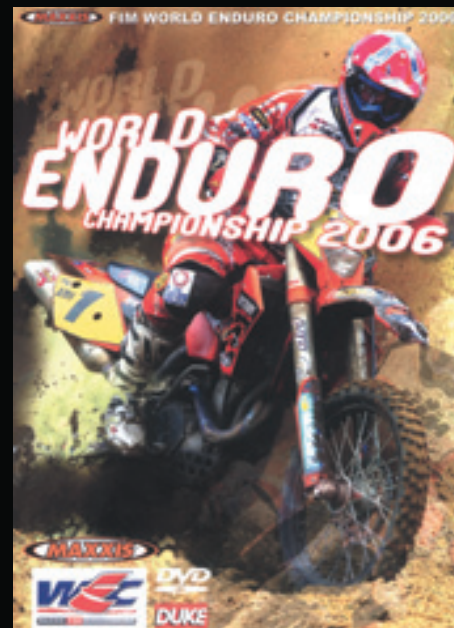


Bar To Bar 2006



The 2006 AMA supercross series was the closest championship chase in the history of the sport as Chad Reed, James Stewart and Ricky Carmichael went bar-to-bar in supersize stadiums right across America. And if it happened – or at least happened in front of the TV cameras – then it'll be on this DVD which features all the Supercross and Supercross Lites action from each and every round, bar Daytona.

So if you've got two-and-a-half hours to kill and you're feeling a little supercrossy then slip these discs in your drive and send yourself to supercross heaven.



WEC 2006 Review



This DVD takes a rather interesting look at all eight rounds of the 2006 World Enduro Championships. If you've never seen footage from a world enduro round you'll most likely be astonished at what British riders like David Knight, Paul Edmondson and Euan McConnell put themselves through to try and beat Europe's best off-road riders.

From Sweden through to the final round in France almost every type of conditions are encountered from snow and ice to tree roots and rocks and this DVD shows it all – an essential watch for off-road fans.

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With Christmas coming we take a look at what's hot and what's not in the wonderful world of off-road DVDs and video games

Reviews by Suttly







EL TORO!

After his Vegas disappointment, David Knight sets about the Barcelona Indoor Enduro like a bull in a china shop...

Words and photos by Jonty Edmunds

HE MIGHT have had the wind taken out of his sails in Vegas when a kamikaze Kawasaki ended his hopes of a second \$10,000 win but at the VIII Barcelona International Indoor Enduro double world champion David Knight is unstoppable as he dominates the annual Spanish event.

A full four seconds quicker than any other rider in qualifying, Knighter then tops each of his four Enduro 3 heat races to pass into the Superfinal as firm favourite to stand on the top spot of the podium.

Clearly in no mood to make life difficult for himself, Knighter's late braking sees him claim an early lead in each of his E3 races – even though he's not the fastest rider out of the gate.

Head down and charging, DK never looks like

being caught and duly takes his place in the Superfinal confident of another win but all too aware of just how important a good start is. With David doing the winning his factory KTM team-mate Marko Tarkkala claims the runner-up E3 spot with local boy Cristobal Guerrero third on his Gas Gas

"I didn't want to see my chances of winning ended by another rider in the first turn like in Vegas," comments Knight. "Each of my four E3 races went perfectly. I didn't get out of the gate ahead in all of the heats but I was always leading exiting turn one. I knew that if I was late on the brakes in the final I'd be okay, which I was."

Joining Knight in the Superfinal after winning each of his four Enduro 1 class



heats is E1 world champion – and crowd favourite – Ivan Cervantes. Anything but fresh after his 29-hour flight home from the New Zealand six days, Ivan is still head and shoulders above his class mates and looks to be the only rider that might be able to challenge DK in the Superfinal.

"My E1 heat races were perfect," announces Ivan to the delight of the Barcelona crowd. "After such a good season it is great to be able to race in front of my home fans and family. I made good starts and didn't make too many mistakes, everything went well."

Passing through to the Superfinal along with Ivan are Britain's Paul Edmondson and Italian Simone Albergoni. Despite the fact that Edmondson's only made occasional international enduro appearances during '06 he shows that he's still got what it takes to mix it

up with the E1 class youngsters.

"My main goal was to try and finish on the podium in the E1 class which I did so I'm really pleased with that. The track was really good, one of the best indoor tracks I've ridden. It was physical though. I didn't have any really bad races and was pretty consistent all night."

In the Enduro 2 class Spaniard Xevi Galindo finishes ahead of two of Finland's biggest named enduro stars – former ISDE winner Mika Ahola and E2 world champion Samuli Aro. Showing that coming from a trials background has a definite advantage when racing indoors, Xevi wins two of his four heats with Ahola and Aro trading wins in the other two.

Not too far behind Aro is British indoor enduro first timer Wayne Braybrook. Long wanting to cut his teeth in the unpredictable and always entertaining world of indoor enduro

racing, Binky finishes with a 4-5-4-6 scorecard, a bent front disc and a couple of seriously pumped up arms.

"It's certainly hard work," admits Wayne, "but great fun. My trials skills helped me over the obstacles but you still need to be aggressive on the jumps. My heats went well but I didn't quite make it though to the Superfinal from there. Winning the LCQ was great but really tiring."

Also competing in an indoor enduro for the first time is Sherco-mounted Graham Jarvis. Missing out on passing through to the Superfinal from his heat races having placed an eventual sixth, Grimbo then crashes heavily in the LCQ and takes no further part in the evening's proceedings.

With only Finn Juha Salminen missing from the Superfinal starting line-up having opted not to race in Barcelona after topping the ISDE in



Simone Albergoni
gets a top-10 finish



Home favourite
Ivan Cervantes
is second



Graham Jarvis
crashes out
of the LCQ

Fast Eddy's still fast
enough to take sixth





It's a tough indoor debut for Wayne Braybrook

VIII Barcelona Indoor Enduro

Superfinal

1 David Knight (KTM), 2 Ivan Cervantes (KTM),
3 Xevi Galindo (KTM), 4 Cristobal Guerrero (Gas Gas),
5 Mika Ahola (Honda), 6 Paul Edmondson (Honda),
7 Marko Tarkkala (KTM), 8 Samuli Aro (KTM),
9 Simone Albergoni (Honda), 10 Lorenzo Santolino (KTM),
11 Gerard Farres (Yamaha), 12 Wayne Braybrook (Gas Gas)



David Knight makes no mistakes to win in Barcelona



New Zealand, behind the gate is a who's who of the world's best enduro racers.

With 12 riders all wanting to win the end-of-night all-classes-together showdown, one rider quickly emerges as wanting it a little more than the others. Behind out of the gate, David Knight is once again late on his brakes and dives up the inside of turn one to take an early – and very definite – lead.

And that's pretty much it as far as Knight's four-lap final is concerned. A country mile ahead after the opening lap, Knight eases his pace halfway through to avoid taking any unnecessary chances.

"It was horrible in the final," comments Knight after the race. "I knew I was a fair way ahead so I didn't need to push too hard but it's hard riding carefully – I just wanted to attack the track and have some fun. After I got the

start I just pushed hard for a couple of laps and then eased off. It's good to win indoors after finishing third in Vegas."

With Knight claiming an unsurprising and deserved win his factory KTM team-mate Ivan Cervantes is second – a result he reckons is as good as a win when competing against David. "I got stuck on the rocks on the first lap so I had to pass a few riders early in the race," recalls Ivan. "I knew I wasn't going to catch David so to finish second is great, especially after winning the E1 class races."

Completing a KTM one-two-three – and making sure all the class winners finish on the podium in the Superfinal – is Xevi Galindo, much to the Spanish crowd's delight.

Sixth goes to Paul Edmondson. Keeping himself out of trouble while others around him try unsuccessfully to work their way forward,

Eddy has a steady four laps and earns himself a solid result.

"I didn't start that well in the Superfinal but I avoided the first lap trouble spots and then set a pace I was happy with," explains Edmondson. "Some riders were faster, some made mistakes but generally I'm really happy with the way I rode."

The third British finisher in the Superfinal is Wayne Braybrook. After giving his all in the LCQ Wayne has just five minutes to gather himself between the two races – and he's knackered!

"I basically had nothing left in the final," admits Wayne. "Indoor enduro racing is so much more physical than it looks. But I'm really pleased simply to have made it into the final, there's some big name riders competing here."





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NZOKI

Finland on top but Brit hopes flop as the ISDE visits New Zealand for the first time

Words & photos by Jonty Edmunds



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**Best E1 Brit is
Ed Jones who
comes home 24th**



WITH A six-man squad not far removed from their 'dream team' of the late '90s, Finland dominate the 81st running of the International Six Days Enduro held for the first time ever in New Zealand.

Always likely to finish at the top of the ISDE results barring any mishaps which can – and often do – happen during six hard days in the saddle, Team Finland finish a long, long way ahead of runners up France as European teams once again dominate the arduous event.

But rather than just the usual Finnish blue and white wash of the Trophy team results the Scandinavian squad well and truly make the event their own as they top all of the three capacity classes. With US GNCC champion Juha Salminen winning the E1 class, world enduro champion Samuli Aro the E2 category and Marko Tarkkala the E3 division it's Finland all the way in Taupo.

In the Junior Trophy competition Team USA claim a well deserved class win relegating France to the runner-up spot with Australia third. With their fast but relatively inexperienced squad of West Coast racers, the US team put in some impressive individual results lead by occasional WEC competitor Kurt Caselli.

But the 81st ISDE isn't a good one for the British Trophy and Junior Trophy teams. Hoping for a top three finish in the JT class, Britain's youngsters place sixth – not a bad result, just not as good as many hoped it would be.



**Five-time world MX
champ Joel Smets
races the ISDE
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With barely enough riders to send a Junior Trophy and a Trophy team the decision to send a strong British Junior team means that the senior Trophy team is never expected to produce too good a result – and they don't by finishing in ninth.

Returning to international enduro competition for the first time since leaving the WEC for a two-year sabbatical in the US at the end of '04, Salminen needs just one day to reacclimatize himself with special test sprints and goes on to win four days before claiming the class win and event overall with a solid final day ride.

"I guess that when things go well, they go well," comments a delighted Juha after the event. "I have never won the six days outright before because I had had lots of silly little problems. To finally win it and help Finland win is great. I've been riding the ISDE for a long time, I did start to think that I might never win one."

Riding faultlessly during the event, Salminen also fires an early WEC warning shot sounding his intentions to collect a record equalling seventh world title in '07.

The rider that Italy at least will be hoping will beat Juha is Simone Albergoni, who claims the runner-up spot to the Finn in Taupo. Performing consistently during the week and never finishing lower than fourth in class, Simone gets close to Salminen on days two and four but can do nothing to stop the charging Finn.

Finishing third, reigning E1 world champion Ivan Cervantes sees his week get off to a bad start as he crashes heavily before the start of the event which detunes the Spaniard early in the week. Looking forward to competing against Juha, Cervantes places a disappointing eighth on days one and two before clawing his way up the E1 class results. Finishing in an eventual third place, the factory KTM star is anything but happy with his result.

Britain's highest placed performer in the E1 class is KTM-mounted Welshman Ed Jones. Riding as a part of the GB Trophy team, Ed has his usual uneventful week to claim 24th. Nine places behind Ed is British Trophy team rider Andrew Edwards. One of the highest placed 125cc two-stroke riders in the E1 class, Andrew – like Ed – has a relatively smooth week with only the odd crash to liven things up a bit. With Yamaha rider Dylan Jones coming home 40th, youngster Ashley Woods finishes as the highest placed British club team rider showing that it won't be long until the Honda rider's part of the British Junior Trophy squad.



Another former world MX champ in action in NZ is Shayne King

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Euro champ Tom Sagar is 23rd in E2

In winning the '06 Enduro 2 world championship, Finn Samuli Aro showed that he's a hard rider to beat – no matter how fierce the competition. In New Zealand he does the exact same thing. Despite only winning two of the first five days, Samuli's consistency is key to his class topping performance as he never places lower than third and is never too far behind on the days he doesn't win.

"It's been a good week for me," admits a not-overly-excited Samuli. "Like all riders the event started to get pretty tiring mentally on day four but I've been riding well so I'm really happy with the way it has gone. I'm happy that the Finnish team won and that I've ridden consistently. So many things can happen at the six days so I'm pleased that I didn't have any troubles and managed to win the E2 class."

With Samuli pleased to have won, countryman Mika Ahola is a little frustrated at claiming the runner-up spot after being in a position to win the class up until day four. A disappointing sixth on day one, Mika finishes second on day two before winning day three. On day four though he stalls his Honda and reckons he wastes at least 30 seconds trying to start it.

But the most disappointed rider in the E2 class is Stefan Merriman. Switching back to a 250cc two-stroke for the event, Stefan's hopes of winning his home race – he's a Kiwi who happens to ride for the Aussie Trophy team – fall short. Starting right by winning day one, Stefan then finishes third and three times second – not enough to top the E2 class at New Zealand's first ever ISDE.

Adding to his European Enduro Championship title, Tom Sagar finishes as Britain's highest placed E2 class rider in 23rd. The first of three British Junior Trophy team riders, Tom is followed by Si Wakely and Darryl Bolter.

With Knighter opting not to compete in New Zealand the top spot in the Enduro 3 class is up for grabs with a number of riders wanting to make the most of DK's absence. Initially it's French KTM rider Fabien Planet that looks most likely to win as he tops days one and two as well as day four. Competing aboard a 300cc two-stroke, Planet makes the most of the stoker in the soft conditions but runs into troubles late in the week. After injuring his hand Fabien places a distant 15th on day five – effectively ending his hopes of winning.

Never too far behind Fabien during the first half of the event,



Another Jones – this time Dylan – ends the six days in 40th in E1

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Chris Hockey helps the British Trophy Team to ninth



Euan McConnell has an awesome debut on the half-litre TM thumper

Finn Marko Tarkkala puts a disappointing season behind him to claim his first notable win since being the only rider to beat Knight in the '05 WEC series. Spaniard Cristobal Guerrero finishes as runner-up on his E3 class debut aboard his Gas Gas.

With no overly impressive E1 or E2 class results for the Brits in New Zealand, Euan McConnell brings home the UK's best result with a solid eighth in the E3 class. Competing on a half-litre thumper for the first time, McConnell gels with the bike instantly and finishes as high as fourth in class on day four.

Matching the pace of all but the fastest E3 class riders, Euan's result is made all the more impressive due to having only ridden the bike briefly before the event.

A good event for Finland, Salminen, Aro and Tarkkala and a not-so-good event for the Brits with the exception of McConnell, the 81st ISDE is also a good event for New Zealand. With many questioning how good the country's first six days would be the organisational team run one of the best events in the last 10 years.

Despite the weather turning bad mid-way through the event making it tough for all riders, many competitors comment how much they enjoyed the event and the challenges it delivered. Only time will tell what next year's six days in Chile will bring...

Results

Trophy Team

1	Finland	9:50.59
2	France	24:59.89
3	Spain	29:56.83
4	Italy	33:15.53
5	Sweden	34:01.32
6	Australia	34:42.04
7	New Zealand	52:29.65
8	Slovakia	1.08:23.57
9	Great Britain	1.10:49.34
10	USA	1.15:41.78

Junior Trophy Team

1	USA	16:27.77
2	France	24:47.55
3	Australia	28:21.98
4	Germany	30:34.31
5	Italy	31:48.25
6	Great Britain	34:20.03



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GREATSCOTT!

SCOTT ELDERFIELD'S BACK ON TRACK AND DESPITE SUFFERING SOME CATASTROPHIC INJURIES LAST SUMMER IS STILL ONE OF BRITAIN'S BRIGHTEST MOTOCROSS HOPES FOR FUTURE SUCCESS

Words by Chris Cayford Photos by still-mx.co.uk

Scott Elderfield's long been recognised as one of the country's fastest young prospects. The kid's outright speed is nothing short of astonishing but speed can come at a costly price as Scott discovered while participating at the World Minis back in June.

A horrendous crash meant a long stay in a Belgian hospital and a big question mark in everyone's head as to whether we'd ever see him back on a bike again. Luckily for us (and him) he's back in action and looking forward to getting back to the winning ways he's so familiar with.

Rage caught up with Scott at Tonymoto for his first full practice session since the crash – here's what he had to say...

Rage: Hi Scott, tell us what's it like to be back?

SE: "Yeah, it's good. I've been out for a long time now so it's really good to be back out riding again."

Rage: For those who don't know, tell us what happened in Belgium...

SE: "Well on the first day I was riding really well – I won all my qualifying races and felt really good on the bike. But on the second day it all went wrong. I was leading the first main when I got cross-rutted on steep downhill section and went over the handlebars."

"It wasn't the fall that did the damage, the bike then landed on me and the rear mudguard dug into my abdomen and that caused my injuries."

Rage: How long were you laid up for?

SE: "I've been out since June so that makes it about six months now... It's been a long time anyway."

Rage: What was involved in the recovery?

SE: "I spent two weeks in intensive care and another four weeks in hospital after that. After I was released I had to spend another six weeks of practically doing nothing, which I didn't like."

"I wasn't allowed to do any physical exercise because of my internal injuries and had to stick to a certain diet. After that I did some light training and today is my first time properly back on the bike."

Rage: So are you back for good now?



Scott, with dad Chris in the background, shows off his scars





SE: "No, I've got a scan in February – I have to see what the results are before I can ride again."

Rage: Did it ever go through your mind that you might not ride again?

SE: "No, not at all. I couldn't wait to get back on a bike and I knew I had the support of everyone around me. I think my parents were a bit shook up by the whole thing but I knew I would be back."

Rage: Before the accident you were winning pretty much everything – tell us how you thought you were riding...

SE: "I was riding good. I know I can ride good but maybe struggled to be consistent in the

past. But working with Greg and the team helped change that, it was just a shame the season ended so early for me."

Rage: We see you're out there on the 150F Honda today – what do you think of the bike?

SE: "Yeah, it's good. It's got more pull out of the corners compared to my 85 but lacks top-end. Because of my size I might need a bigger frame but it's a fun bike to ride, I like it."

Rage: What are your plans going forward?

SE: "Well, at the moment we're only planning on doing club meetings and maybe entering a few bigger races through the year but I'll have to see how it goes before making any decisions. My aim is to compete in the final round of the

BYMX championship at Hawkstone Park."

We also caught up with Hanson Racing team manager Greg Hanson to grab his views on Scott and his riding ability.

"If there's a bad side to this job it's the injuries," reckons Greg. "The team were left feeling devastated by Scott's accident. But seeing him out there today makes it all worthwhile, he's as eager as ever and is going to have to be held back for his own good."

"The lad's got a racing pedigree that's second to none – he doesn't know second best. His mentality is the same as Tommy Searle's and look what he's achieving these days! With the right guidance there's no reason why Scott can't be the next Tommy!"

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Lewis Kerr tears up the track

TEEMSPIRIT!

RAIN FAILS TO STOP PLAY AT THE OPENING ROUND OF THE MAXXIS BRITISH OUTDOOR YOUTH SX SERIES

Photo by Paul Sewter

It rains, then it rains some more. The wisdom of an outdoor SX series at this time of year has already been questioned but clever design means the track stands up to the elements for round one of the Maxxis British Outdoor Youth Supercross Championship.

Held at the back end of November at the Norfolk Arena at King's Lynn, promoters Keith and Jonathan Chapman cleverly rejig the race programme to combat the rain and are rewarded with a smooth running evening of action.

George Turner's the Auto hero of the evening, recovering to second from an opening lap crash in race two to add to his race one win for the overall from Camlann MacDonald whose 3-1 card just gets the nod from Josh Bunter's 2-2 results.

The 65cc class is dominated by Robert Davidson who picks up a pair of gate-to-flag victories. Kenny Ryalls follows him home in the opener before a crash in race two ends his hopes of some silverware. Instead it's Jordan Moxey who mounts the second step of the podium after tying on points with Alfie Bowtell but getting the decision on the better second race rule.

There's another tie in the SW85s – this time for first place – with James Dunn and Bradley Ward trading wins. Ward wins the first from Dunn and local boy George Redhead before Dunn turns the tables to take the overall in race two with Redhead again third.

Up in the BW85s a fall in the opening race stops George Baldwin from topping the podium. After coming through the pack for third George then takes a well-deserved race two win. But race one winner Robbie Joe Waller keeps his cool to claim the runner-up spot second time out for overall honours. A 2-3 card gives Mark Richards third.

Norwegian teenager Pier Kristian Bakke comes over just for the event and his trip is made well worthwhile with a perfect 1-1 score to comfortably top the Youth 125cc division. Second in the first race, George Winn follows this up with third for second overall on the night in front of Karl Johnson.

JOSHUA CANTON



AGE: 9
BIKE: KTM
YEARS RACING: 3
KIT: ALLOY AND FOX
NUMBER OF TROPHIES: 46
TITLES: 1
BROKEN BONES: 1
TRUCK/VAN: IVECO

THOMAS CANTON



AGE: 6
BIKE: KTM
YEARS RACING: 4 RACES
KIT: ALLOY AND NO FEAR
TITLES: NONE YET
BROKEN BONES: 0
TRUCK/VAN: IVECO

CALUM MCBAIN



AGE: 8
BIKE: KTM
YEARS RACING: 2
KIT: ALPINESTARS
NUMBER OF TROPHIES: 50
TITLES: 4
BROKEN BONES: 0
TRUCK/VAN: FORD TRANSIT



MINIWARRIORS

With a severe lack of Brits entered for this year's Mini Os at Gatorback Park in Gainesville, Florida, most of the European interest in the event falls on the shoulders of young German star Ken Roczen. And the 12-year-old doesn't disappoint by taking victory in both the 85 (7-11) modified and stock classes.

Next season Ken moves up an age group to the 12-15 division in AMA competition and will have to take on the likes of American mini warriors Eli Tomac and this month's Rage cover-star Blake Baggett.

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OIRISH ODYSSEY

IT'S A BATTLE OF THE 65s IN THE BELFAST ODYSSEY ARENA

There are 15 top 65cc riders from Ireland and the UK in Belfast's Odyssey Arena to battle it out to see who's best over two nights of racing.

Although Liam Garland takes the overall win on night one there's no denying that Ben Watson's by far the fastest rider on the track. Unfortunately for Ben a final lap fall in the first moto knocks him back to sixth while Garland takes a fine win.

Results

Friday

- 1 Liam Garland (KTM)
- 2 Glen McCormick (KTM)
- 3 Ben Watson (KTM)
- 4 Jordan Ashton (KTM)
- 5 Stuart Simpson (KTM)
- 6 Stuart Fee (Kawasaki)

Saturday

- 1 Ben Watson (KTM)
- 2 Glen McCormick (KTM)
- 3 Malachi Mitchell-Thomas (KTM)
- 4 Jordan Ashton (KTM)
- 5 Stuart Fee (Kawasaki)
- 6 Liam Garland (KTM)

Ben bounces back to win race two but Garland knows if Watson wins he only has to finish in the top five to take the overall and easily does it by tailing Watson to the flag. Glen McCormick scores second overall thanks to a pair of third place finishes while Watson secures the third step of the Odyssey podium.

A much smoother track awaits the racers for night two and with no ruts for Watson to get tangled up in he easily wins both motos to take the top spot. McCormick takes another second overall with 4-2 finishes while Malachi Mitchell-Thomas takes third with a 2-6 scorecard.



Liam Garland wins on Friday



Stuart Fee and Stuart Simpson fight it out



Mark Carvill gets on the gas



Ben Watson's on top on the Saturday



Greg Fisher - still Twisted

TWISTED HEAVEN!

U lverston-based youth racer Greg 'G-reg' Fisher has re-signed for the Animal Twisted-7 Kawasaki team.

Fisher, who's even more Cumbrian than radioactive sheep, was drafted into Jeff Perrett's squad midway through 2006 after proving himself to be more than twisted enough to be a worthy member of the team. "Yeah, he's a little odd," admits Perrett. "But I quite like that."

And it's rumoured that Greg's equally delighted to be back on the team for at least another year. "It's reet good, eh, I'm dead pleased, eh!" he might have said if we'd been able to get hold of him before going to press.

BELFAST BLUES!

BILLY SIGNS OFF FROM HIS YAMAHA CONTRACT WITH TWO NIGHTS AT THE ODYSSEY ARENA



WHAT'S THAT Sean? Column time? I knew it was coming soon, I could feel his presence all around, the ghost that is Lawless, stalking my shadow, ready to pounce at the end of every month. Sitting in my bed terrified of the Nokia message tone then reading the oh so scary two words – column time!

Sometimes he spells it wrong too.

I'll start with Belfast, always a proper good show! We had two nights racing and both were cracking. Gordy was on fire! He was riding some turquoise and black thing which was part of a deal he had set up with some betting agency but I reckon he had bet on himself for the win because he was riding like a caveman! He kicked my arse anyways! Brownny was the only one who took it to him and beat him in the final but I led quite a few races until the dying laps only to be done by Gordy! Once on the very last corner too – I was raging!

It was my last race on the Yamaha so it woulda been nice to finish on a win but I had fun and it was a good night. The track was a little soft the first night and there were loads of funny crashes, including myself! I couldn't skip the whoops! Riding the 450 was completely different – on the small stuff with the 250F you can just hook her to third or fourth and hold her wide open! But on the 450 I was scared to put her on full lock – it didn't stop me trying though. On the last practice I just went out purely to skip the whoops, I was missing half the track then coming round and just going for it. Sometimes I got through, sometimes I didn't! All part of the craic though! So when the finals came that's what let me down – the rest of the track I had pretty dialed and my corner speed was good.

After the final on Saturday it was party time! Every year Belfast is known for the after party – it's like the goodbye to the season with lots of reminiscing of battles, crashes, tracks and good rides. Unfortunately, we didn't finish until 11pm and by the time we got back to hotel and had a shower we didn't really get enough time to have the party that we all wanted because the clubs closed at 1am. Unusual for Ireland I thought!

We managed to sneak in for an hour though and that was enough just to get a little tipsy. I was with my mechanic Benny Pops and my friend Tim from

Edinburgh minibike so we were just cruising around chatting to any familiar face we could see. When 1am came and it was time to leave we all jumped in the taxi and went back to the hotel – luckily the bar was open there and everyone had their own little party in the hotel lobby. I prefer it like that when you know everyone there and it's a little more relaxed. Everyone was having a proper laugh and getting drinks in and next time you see Mr Tommy Searle ask him about his love bite he got that night!

Ireland was kind of a weekend break for most of us as we started training a couple weeks beforehand. November is pretty much just weights and a few cycle rides so most of us were pumped up after a couple of laps! The gym can get so boring

sometimes – me, Bryan and Stevie are in the gym every morning at nine then out by 12, get some lunch then go cycling or running for an hour to two hours. It's nice having a routine again after everything is so hectic travelling everywhere during the season. So training is going good and it's funny having my brother along as he's never really done it properly before. Who knows? Maybe now he's got his arse in gear he might do well next year!

The best day of the week though is when we play five-a-side, it's absolutely hilarious! Ten motocross guys playing indoor footy – it gets pretty rough, no finesse for this sport I tell ya! And the best thing is we are indoors so no matter how hard you kick the ball it always comes back! I even purchased a pair of

Adidas Sambas! My dad used to wear these things! And I always told him I would never wear a pair of them but you know what? As soon as I slipped those puppies on I was like Ally McCoist (who? – SL)! Firing goals in everywhere! The score is normally around 8-6! More like a rugby score with those figures! It's a good work out though and it beats an hour run any day!

Right, well I know this hasn't been my best column but there's Jack to talk about right now – it's all training, testing and organizing. Next year ain't far away already and I still don't know what I'm going to do with myself!

Have a good Chrimbo and New Year everyone! I'm going skiing!



Billy Mackenzie



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